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ABSTRACT

Patterns of success and failure in the transition from school to work in Australia in the 1980s-1990s were examined by analyzing data from the Australian Youth Survey. Of those studied, 20% found full-time jobs upon leaving school and remained in full-time employment for the next 7 years, 13% obtained apprenticeships or traineeships leading to continuous full-time work, a similar percentage undertook further study and later gained full-time employment, and about 24% experienced only a short period of unemployment or part-time work before entering lasting full-time employment. However, 7% of school leavers experienced long-term unemployment, 5% experienced mainly part-time work while searching for a full-time job, and 13% managed to eventually achieve full-time employment but only after up to 4 years of unemployment, part-time work, or activities outside the labor force. The following factors were associated with disproportionately high rates of more difficult school-to-work transitions: low achievement while in school; failure to complete year 12; socioeconomic background; and disabilities. The study underscored the importance of preventive measures within the education system and intensive follow-up measures for school leavers experiencing problems in the labor market. Those measures will be helped by keeping the numbers of school leavers low by improving young people's literacy and numeracy skills and offering a range of pathways suited to differing interests and needs at the end of compulsory education so that more stay in

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education and training. An overview of the study data and methods and 14 additional tables/figures are appended. (Contains 33 tables and 14 references.)(MN)

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ED 470 854

LSAY Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

Research Report Number 18

Patterns of Success and Failure in the Transition from School to Work in Australia

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- Marks, G., Fleming, N., Long, M. and McMillan, J. *Patterns of Participation in Year 12 and Higher Education in Australia: Trends and Issues* (LSAY Research Report No. 17). Melbourne: ACER, December 2000.
- Lamb, S. and McKenzie, P. *Patterns of Success and Failure in the Transition from School to Work in Australia* (LSAY Research Report No. 18). Melbourne: ACER, June 2001.

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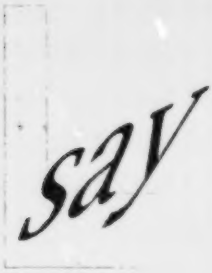

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

Research Report Number 18

PATTERNS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK IN AUSTRALIA

Stephen Lamb
Phillip McKenzie

This report forms part of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth: a research program that is jointly managed by ACER and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs

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Executive Summary

This report maps the pathways of a sample of young Australians in their transition from school to work. It focuses on the pathways for those who do not obtain a university degree or TAFE associate diploma or above (or who are not enrolled for such qualifications in the seventh post-school year). By focusing on this group the analysis concentrates on those for whom getting a job was a key concern immediately upon leaving school.

The transition experiences of those who obtain a tertiary qualification after leaving school are analysed in a related LSAY report by Lamb (2001). Between them the two reports provide a comprehensive picture of the transition from school to work of a national sample of Year 10 students.

The data used to examine transition experiences are from the *Australian Youth Survey*, a major longitudinal survey of young Australians interviewed annually on their school experiences, post-school education and training participation and work activities. The analyses are based largely on a sample of Year 10 students in the late 1980s. The experiences of this sample of young people are measured over the first seven post-school years. A second sample of Year 10 students from the mid-1990s is also used to look at relationships with early school achievement. The post-school education, training and employment experiences of the mid-1990s sample are measured over three years.

Findings

The results show that the move from school to work can be a relatively smooth transition for the majority of this group of young people who did not obtain tertiary qualifications. About 20 per cent of school leavers obtain a full-time job on leaving school and, while they may change jobs along the way, remain in full-time work for the next seven years. A further 13 per cent obtain apprenticeships or traineeships which lead to continuous full-time work, while a similar percentage undertake further study and later gain long term full-time employment. In addition about 24 per cent experience only a short period of unemployment or part-time work before entering lasting full-time employment.

The results show that the pathways followed by school leavers are highly individualised. There is great diversity in the pathways followed by young people, as well as great mobility across them. Such results suggest the need for stronger information and counselling services to help young people and their families as they navigate their way after leaving school, better tracking of the early labour market experiences of school leavers, and early identification and intervention for those who appear to be most at risk.

Settling in to the labour force takes much longer for some groups

However, for the remaining one-third of the young people analysed in this report, the transition from school to work is not smooth. For 7 per cent it involves long term unemployment while another 5 per cent experience mainly part-time work while in the search for a full-time job. For a large group — 13 per cent — full-time work is achieved, but only after an extended period (up to four years) of unemployment, part-time work or activities outside of the labour force. A further 7 per cent never really enter the labour market, spending most of their time rearing children or being engaged in other activities.

The young people whose transition from school is more problematic (in the sense of spending less than three years in full-time work in the first seven years after leaving school) are disproportionately drawn from particular educational and social backgrounds. Many are low school achievers, and many have not completed Year 12. For example, early school leavers were much more likely to experience long term unemployment on entry to the labour market. Over 12 per cent of male non-completers experienced four or more years of unemployment in the first seven post-school years. The rate for male Year 12 leavers was 7 per cent. The numbers of years of schooling make a big difference to the transition experiences. The likelihood of experiencing long term unemployment and of not being able to secure full-time work is much greater among those who leave school before Year 10. Over 20 per cent of male Year 9 leavers were unemployed for four years or more. The rates fall for each additional year of schooling with the unemployed rate for those who complete Year 12 well below the Year 10 rate.

Social background is strongly related to whether or not young people make a smooth transition to full-time work. The pathways of low SES and high SES school leavers reveal that more low SES students experience difficulties in making the transition to full-time work. Ten per cent more low SES school leavers compared to high SES leavers participate in pathways involving long-term unemployment or extended periods not in the labour force.

Young people with disabilities experience substantial difficulty in making the transition from school to full-time work. Many do not enter the labour force at all over the first seven post-school years — 18 per cent compared to 5 per cent of those without a disability. But even though proportionately fewer young people with disabilities enter the labour force , those with a disability and seeking work struggle to secure full-time employment. They more often experience long-term unemployment (13 per cent as against 7 per cent for those without a disability). They also more often enter a pathway involving mainly part-time work (8 per cent compared to 4 per cent) or full-time work achieved after lengthy periods of unemployment, part-time work or not in the labour force (15 per cent as against 13 per cent).

Students who achieve strong literacy and numeracy skills in school are more likely to be successful in making the transition to full-time employment or training in the first few post-school years than students who do not achieve strong skills in those areas.

Initial experiences can have lasting effects

A common feature of the experiences of those who have a more problematic transition in terms of securing full-time work is the relationship between their careers across seven years and the activities they participate in during their first post-school year. Most who do not have a smooth school to work transition, often having experienced academic failure in school and then leaving school early, start out unemployed or at best in part-time work. Their experiences lend support to the "mill-stone" view of the impact of early labour market experience on workforce careers rather than to the "stepping stone" argument. For these young people, rather than the initial settling-in period representing a trial period where activities act as a stepping-stone to full-time employment, the results suggest that a negative early start has adverse long-term consequences.

This relationship between initial activities and long term outcomes also applies to those who experience smooth transitions to full-time work. For example for those males whose principal activity in the first post-school year is an apprenticeship or traineeship, almost all (95 per cent) subsequently experience what can be characterised as a successful pathway (lasting full-time employment). The large majority of young men who spend the first post-school year in full-time work also experience a successful pathway (83 per cent), as do those who start with full-time study (74 per cent) or part-time work combined with study (67 per cent). By contrast, less than two-fifths of young men whose main first year activity is somewhat problematic experience a successful pathway over the next six years.

The same general pattern holds for female school leavers. If the first post-school year is spent in a positive way (in structured training, full-time work or study) there is a strong likelihood that full-time work will be the main pattern experienced over the next six years. However, for those young women whose main activity in the first post-school year is working part-time (but not studying), or being unemployed, or outside the labour force altogether, only 33 per cent, 20 per cent and 9 per cent respectively subsequently experience a successful pathway over the next six years.

Conclusions

These results underline the importance of intensive follow-up measures for school leavers experiencing problems in the labour market. The results also reinforce the importance of preventative measures within the education system. There are strong associations between schooling and social background and the likelihood of where young people find themselves in their first post-school year. Young people are not distributed randomly among the main initial post-school activities. Achieving well in school, and completing Year 12, have significant employment and earnings outcomes for young people a decade or more after leaving school. Early school leavers have less chance of securing full-time employment, and a problematic early start in the labour market can be difficult to overcome. This disadvantage serves to reinforce the impact of disadvantages experienced earlier in the school and social system.

From an educational policy perspective, the strongest thrust needs to be preventative: improving young people's foundation skills for lifelong learning, and providing learning environments that are attractive and relevant to the great majority of the young. Experience in Australia and elsewhere shows that there is no inevitability about the number of early school leavers, and that chances for successful intervention are higher while young people are still in school. Improving the literacy and numeracy skills of young people, and offering a range of pathways suited to differing interests and needs at the end of compulsory education encourage a higher proportion of young people to remain in education and training. Intensive measures to help early leavers in the labour market can be all the more effective if resources are freed up by keeping their numbers low in the first place.

1

Introduction

The majority of young Australians (around 60 per cent) do not enrol for a university degree or a TAFE associate diploma course after leaving school. Instead, they look for employment, or take up an apprenticeship or traineeship, or enrol in a TAFE certificate course or, in some cases, drop out of the labour market altogether. The opportunities that young people have in the early years after leaving school, and the decisions they take, can have major implications for their long-term economic and social well-being.

This paper documents the pathways followed by this large group of young people in the years between leaving secondary school and the time they reach their mid-20s. It provides a detailed analysis of their labour market experiences for up to seven years after leaving school. The analyses draw on the most extensive data available on young Australians' education and employment experiences over time – the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY). Comparisons are made between different groups of school leavers to identify the pathways for those who make successful transitions to stable full-time employment, and the pathways for those who have not been able to secure stable full-time work. A key policy concern is whether social and educational disadvantages that are associated with teenagers leaving school early become even more marked as they mature into young adults.

In Section 2 the paper outlines the data used for the analyses in the study, providing information on the samples of participants. The next section presents information on the main annual activities of young people as they move from school to work. Particular attention is paid to looking at what happens to different groups of young people as they make the transition from school. Section 4 uses the information from Section 3 and weekly calendar data to identify the main pathways by which stable full-time employment is reached, as well as indicators of a failure to attain stable full-time employment — intermittent or part-time work, unemployment, and withdrawal from the labour market. In Section 5 the focus is on the characteristics of the young people who are in the various pathways in terms of their social, individual and educational backgrounds. Section 6 analyses the labour market experiences associated with the various pathways: the time taken to find a job; unemployment incidence and duration; the number and type of jobs held; and earnings. The final part of the paper, Section 7, identifies the main policy issues arising from the analyses.

2

Participants in the Study

This section describes the source of data, and the nature of the sample for whom data are analysed. The characteristics analysed include a wide range of social and educational background variables that are associated with completing school and moving into employment.

Drawing upon the *Australian Youth Survey*, this report examines the labour market experiences of two samples of young people. The first sample comprises those who were in Year 10, or who had left school but would have been in Year 10, in the late 1980s (1986, 1987 or 1988). The labour market experiences of this sample are measured over the first seven post-school years with the first year taken from the time at which they finished Year 12 or would have finished Year 12 had they remained at school. The second sample comprises those who were in the equivalent of Year 10 in the early 1990s (1991 or 1992). The experiences of this group are examined over the first three post-school years. The latter sample is analysed as part of this report because it includes data on students' achievement in literacy and numeracy at school; such data were not available for the older sample.

The analyses concentrate on those who leave school and enter work or who undertake further training or who do not enter the labour force but are not studying. The analyses exclude those who gain or are working towards university qualifications or a TAFE diploma. (The transition experiences of those who obtain a tertiary qualification after leaving school are analysed in a related LSAY report by Lamb, 2001). The exclusion from the present report of those who pursue university or TAFE diploma qualifications influences the composition of the target samples. Previous research has shown that those who enter university tend to come from particular social and cultural backgrounds. For example, university graduates are more often from middle class families and from private schools (Long, Carpenter and Hayden, 1995).

The period over which many of these young people entered the labour market spanned the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was a time of mixed economic fortunes in Australia. In the late 1980s economic growth was strong; the national unemployment rate fell to around 7 per cent in 1989, and the 15-19 year-old unemployment rate reached around 15 per cent, its lowest level for the 1980s. However, over the next few years economic growth slowed markedly, and by 1992 the national unemployment rate exceeded 10 per cent and the teenage unemployment rate was close to 25 per cent. Thus, those who left school early and entered the full-time job market direct from school were doing so at a time (in the late 1980s) when job prospects were relatively good. By contrast, those who completed secondary school and went onto tertiary study were more likely to be seeking full-time work in the early 1990s, which was a more challenging time for new entrants to the job market. Thus the results presented in this report, which focus on those without tertiary qualifications, largely cover a period in which early school leavers could have been expected to have fared relatively well in obtaining employment.

Table 2.1 contains the original and target sample sizes for the sample of Year 10 students in the late 1980s. For example, 62 per cent of the original sample of 1062 Year 10 males satisfy the criterion for inclusion in the study, i.e. they did not obtain a university or

TAFE diploma qualification in the first seven post-school years and were not studying for one of these qualifications in the seventh year. Thus, the 657 males in the final column are the target male sample and the focus of the analysis. The number of females who met the criterion for inclusion in the target sample was 572.

According to the figures in Table 2.1, after the seven years immediately following school, about 38 per cent of male school leavers in the late 1980s had obtained a university degree or TAFE associate diploma, compared to over 48 per cent of females. About six in ten students from high SES origins proceeded to university or TAFE and received a degree or diploma, whereas only three in ten did so from lower SES origins. Young people who went to secondary school in urban areas of Australia were more likely to graduate from a university or TAFE diploma course than young people who attended secondary school in rural areas (48 per cent compared to 34 per cent).

The effect of excluding from the analyses those who complete a qualification equivalent to an associate diploma or university degree is to increase in the target sample the representation of early school leavers, low achievers, males, young people who went to secondary school in rural areas, those with Australian-born rather non-English-speaking parents, and students from government schools. Researchers of school-to-work transition have reported difficulties for some of these groups in making the transition to work, particularly early school leavers and low achievers (Miller & Volker, 1987; Lamb, 1997; Marks & Fleming, 1998a, 1998b). The composition of the target sample used for the analyses in this work is displayed in the fifth column of Table 2.1 which presents the percentages of young people in the target sample from across different backgrounds.

Similar figures for the younger sample (presented in Table 2.1A in Appendix 2) show that as well as the patterns described above, young people who take the university or TAFE diploma route after leaving school are generally higher achievers in school. Nearly 60 per cent of those in the highest quartile of literacy and numeracy achievement at age 14 were studying for a university degree or TAFE diploma three years after school, or had gained the qualification, compared to only 12 per cent of those in the lowest quartile of achievers. This means that the target samples for the current work have relatively high proportions of low school achievers compared to the original samples of Year 10 students.

Table 2.1 Percentage distribution of the original and target samples, by selected background characteristics: Year 10 students in the late 1980s

Characteristic	Original sample of Year 10 students				Target sample*	
	No qualification or current study	Qualified or still in study	Total	N	Percentage of target sample	N
	%	%	%		%	
Sex						
Males	61.9	38.1	100	1062	53.5	657
Females	51.7	48.3	100	1106	46.5	572
Socio-economic status						
Lowest	70.0	30.0	100	456	29.4	319
Lower middle	60.3	39.7	100	658	36.6	397
Upper middle	47.2	52.8	100	494	21.5	233
Highest	38.6	61.4	100	352	12.5	136
Parents' education						
Secondary school or less	66.7	33.3	100	1234	69.4	823
Some postsecondary	52.8	47.2	100	362	16.1	191
University	33.3	66.7	100	517	14.5	172
Ethnicity						
Australian-born	58.1	41.9	100	1682	79.5	823
Other-English	60.5	39.5	100	157	7.7	191
Non-English-speaking	47.7	52.3	100	329	12.8	172
Residence						
Urban	52.3	47.8	100	1491	63.4	779
Rural	66.5	33.5	100	677	36.6	450
School type						
Government	65.0	35.0	100	1487	78.7	967
Catholic	40.1	59.9	100	439	14.3	176
Independent	35.1	64.5	100	242	7.0	86
Disability						
No disability	56.1	43.9	100	1979	90.3	1110
Disability	63.0	37.0	100	189	9.7	119
School attainment						
Early school leaver	91.8	8.2	100	564	42.4	518
Year 12	44.4	55.6	100	1587	57.6	705
Total	1229	939		2168		1229

* The target sample excludes young people who had completed a university degree or TAFE diploma in the first seven post-school years, or were studying towards these qualifications in the seventh year. The Ns for the various sub-groups differ slightly due to missing data on some of the variables.

3

School to Work Transition

The time following secondary school is a period of transition for most young people. While some school leavers enter the labour market and obtain work in full-time jobs, others can experience difficulty in securing full-time work and face periods of unemployment or extended spells in part-time work. In addition, others may not even enter the labour force but pursue further study or training before seeking full-time work, or even spend periods- for some, quite long periods - not engaged in study, work or training.

The current section examines some of the features of school-to-work transition by using a series of snapshots of the early post-school education and work careers of young people. The snapshots are taken annually across the first seven post-school years and focus on the main education and work activities. By examining annual education and work status in this way, it is possible to identify the main patterns of activities and experiences in the transition from school to work.

Activities in the transition to work

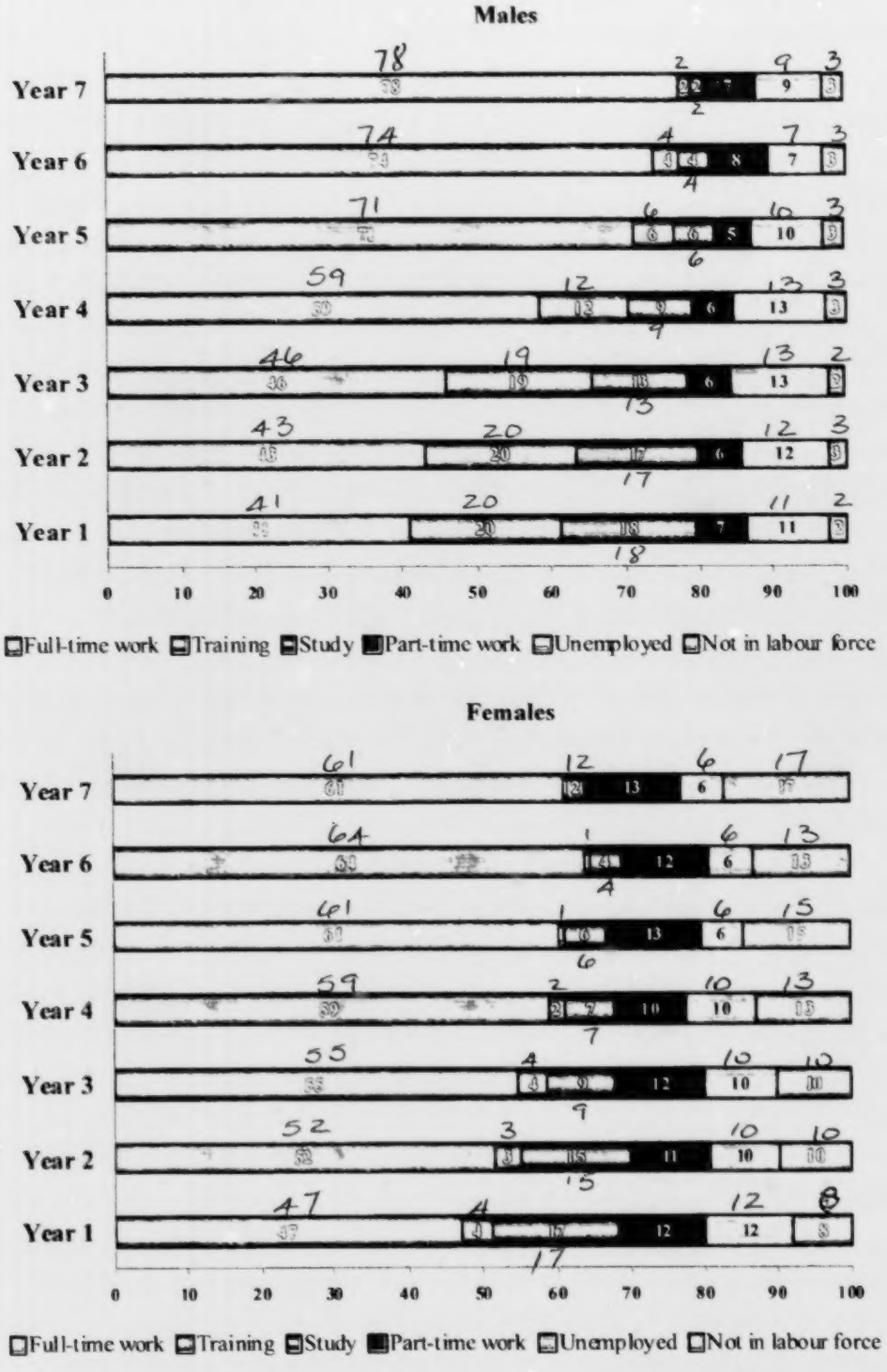
To examine the patterns of post-school activity, we classified young people into seven groups each year based on the primary activity they were engaged in. (The primary or main activity, which was based on an annual self-report of activities during the year, was defined as the activity which respondents were doing for the main part of the year concerned, ie more than six months). The activities were:

1. Apprenticeship/traineeship
2. Full-time employment
3. Part-time work and no study
4. Part-time work and study
5. Full-time study
6. Unemployed
7. Not in the labour force

The first four groups can be considered as engaged in employment-related activities. Young people in the first two groups are either working full-time or are participating in work-based training. Those in the third and fourth categories are working, but they either cannot find or are not interested in working full-time, or are combining part-time work with part-time study. Those in the fifth category are undertaking full-time further study. The sixth and seventh categories are those not in work and not studying.

Figure 3.1 presents the distribution of the older sample in each post-school year across the different activities (Appendix 2 includes the detailed Tables from which the Figures are derived). The experiences of males are shown in the top panel and the experiences of females in the lower panel. Those who were in part-time work and part-time study were combined with those in full-time study because of small numbers in the former group. The figure shows that 41 per cent of males were in full-time employment in the first year, a further 20 per cent were in apprenticeships or traineeships and another 18 per cent in full-time study.

Figure 3.1 Percentage distribution of education and employment activities, by gender and year-out-of-school



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About 7 per cent of males were in part-time work and 11 per cent unemployed with only about 2 per cent not in the labour force. Across each successive year, as young men finish their study or training, the numbers in full-time study and in apprenticeships and traineeships fall and the proportion in full-time work grows. This means that for each year roughly 80 per cent are engaged in full-time study, in apprenticeships or traineeships or in full-time work. However, by the seventh post-school year the majority — 78 per cent — are in full-time work.

The pattern for females is similar, except that the total in full-time work, training or study is about 70 rather than 80 per cent. Furthermore, the proportion in apprenticeships or traineeships is much smaller than for males (about 4 per cent in the first year compared to about 20 per cent for males). Female rates of part-time work are about double that for males in each year, although, apart from the first year, their rate of unemployment is lower.

A major difference between males and females is the proportion not in the labour force. In the first post-school year 8 per cent of young women were in domestic duties or not in the labour force compared to only 2 per cent of males. The rate for women increased each year to 17 per cent by the seventh year, with most doing so to care for children (see Section 6). The proportion of females not in the labour force in the seventh year is almost six times that for males.

Differences in the patterns related to school attainment

Whether young people complete Year 12 before leaving school or not is linked to differences in patterns of transition. One of the main differences for males is related to participation in further study and the numbers who are unemployed.

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show that further study is far more important in the activities of those who leave from Year 12 than of early school leavers.

In the first post-school year, 28 per cent of male Year 12 leavers were in full-time study compared to only 6 per cent of early school leavers. While further study is a major activity among Year 12 graduates, in proportionate terms, apprenticeships are far more important in the transition experiences of early school leavers. Nearly one in three male early school leavers were in an apprenticeship or traineeship in their first post-school year compared to one in seven Year 12 leavers.

As males move from further study and training into work, the rates of those in full-time work become similar for the different schooling backgrounds. By the seventh year 75 per cent of early leavers were in full-time work, compared to 79 per cent of those who left school from Year 12. Of course, the rates of employment say nothing about the quality of jobs young people are in. This issue will be examined in Section 6.

Unemployment is more common in the transition experiences of early school leavers than of school completers, at least in terms of annual activities. The incidences of unemployment in the first year are roughly the same — 11 per cent for early leavers and 12 per cent for Year 12 completers. But following the first year the rates are, on average, five percentage points higher for early school leavers. Seven years out of school, 13 per cent of male early school leavers were unemployed compared to 7 per cent of Year 12 completers.

Figure 3.2 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity for males, by school attainment and year-out-of-school

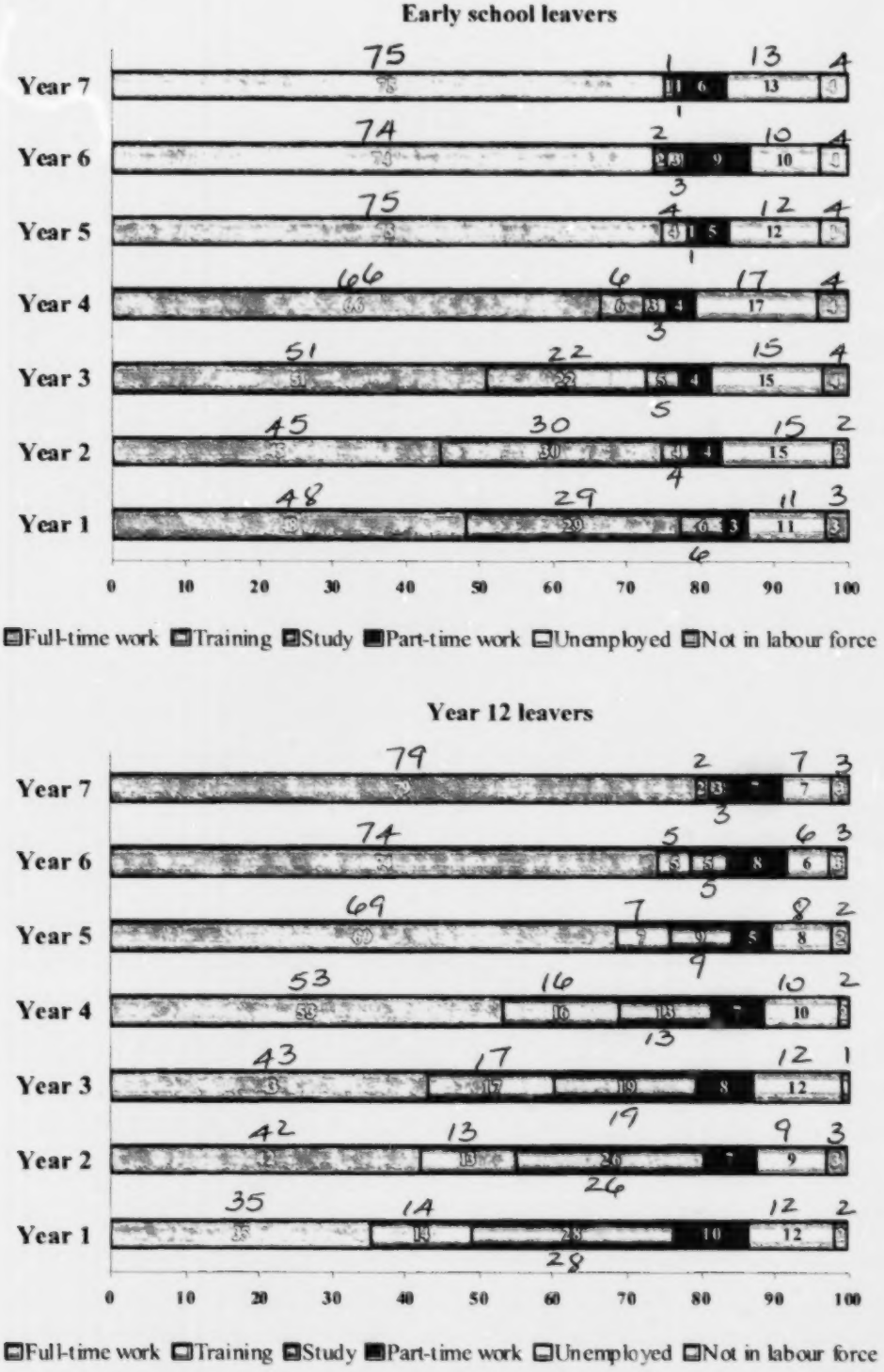

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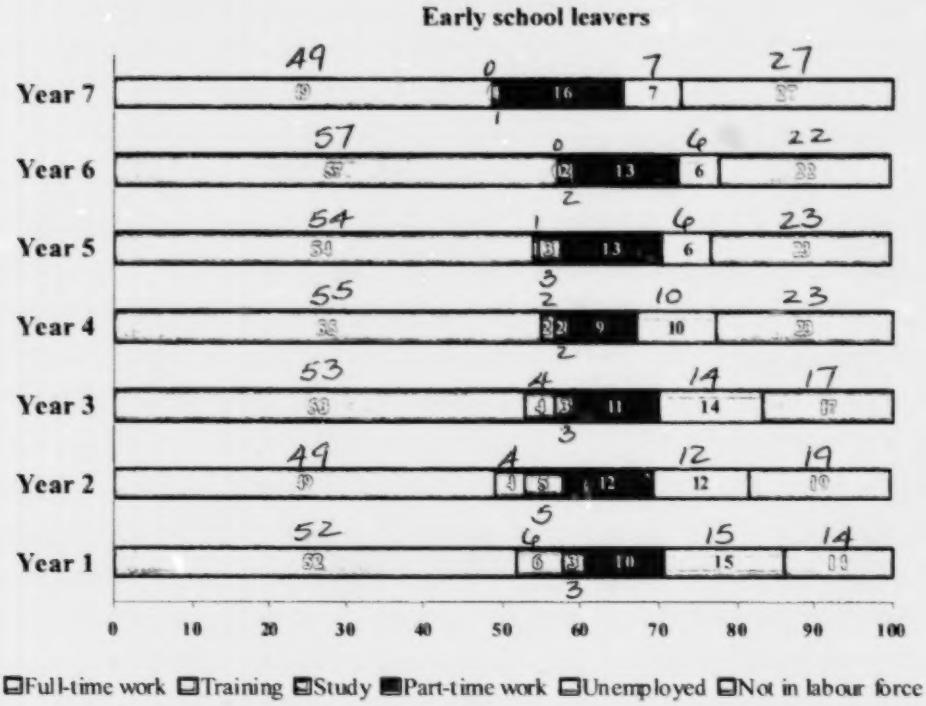
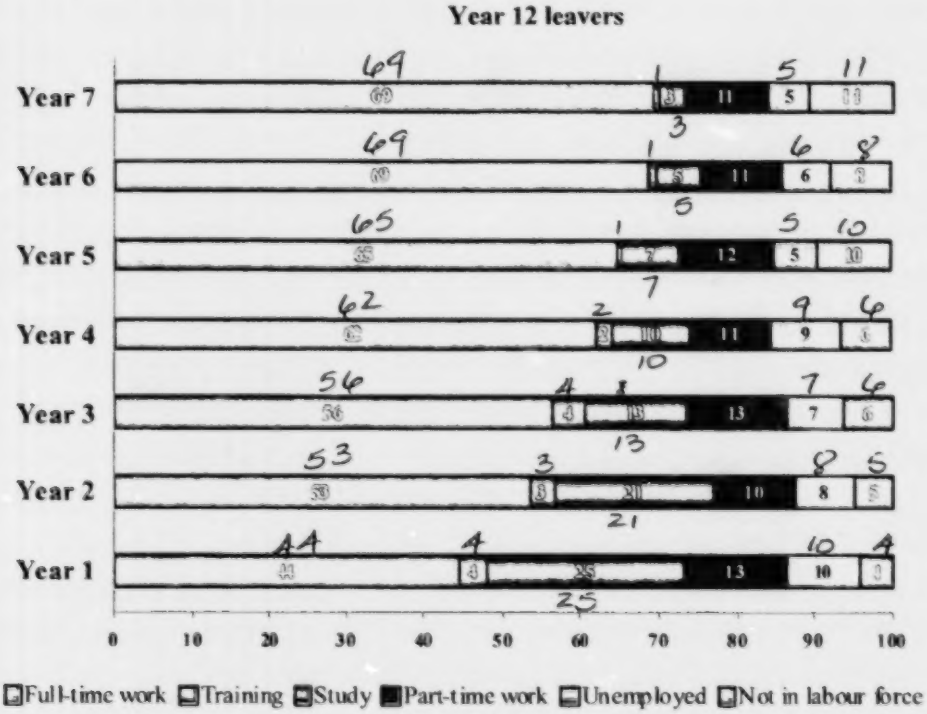
Figure 3.3 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity for females, by school attainment and year-out-of-school





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For females, the patterns show that in each post-school year many more early school leavers than Year 12 completers are not looking for work and are not in work, study or training (Figure 3.3). The gap, 10 percentage points in the first year, grows to 16 percentage points in the seventh year where over a quarter of female early school leavers are not in the labour force.

Partly because of this, the differences in incidences of unemployment in the early years (there are lower rates among Year 12 completers) narrow over time as female early school leavers more often leave the labour force than those who complete Year 12.

From the second year, more Year 12 completers are in full-time work (53 per cent as against 49 per cent) and the gap grows annually. In the seventh post-school year 69 per cent of female Year 12 completers were in full-time jobs compared to 49 per cent of early leavers.

Differences based on school achievement

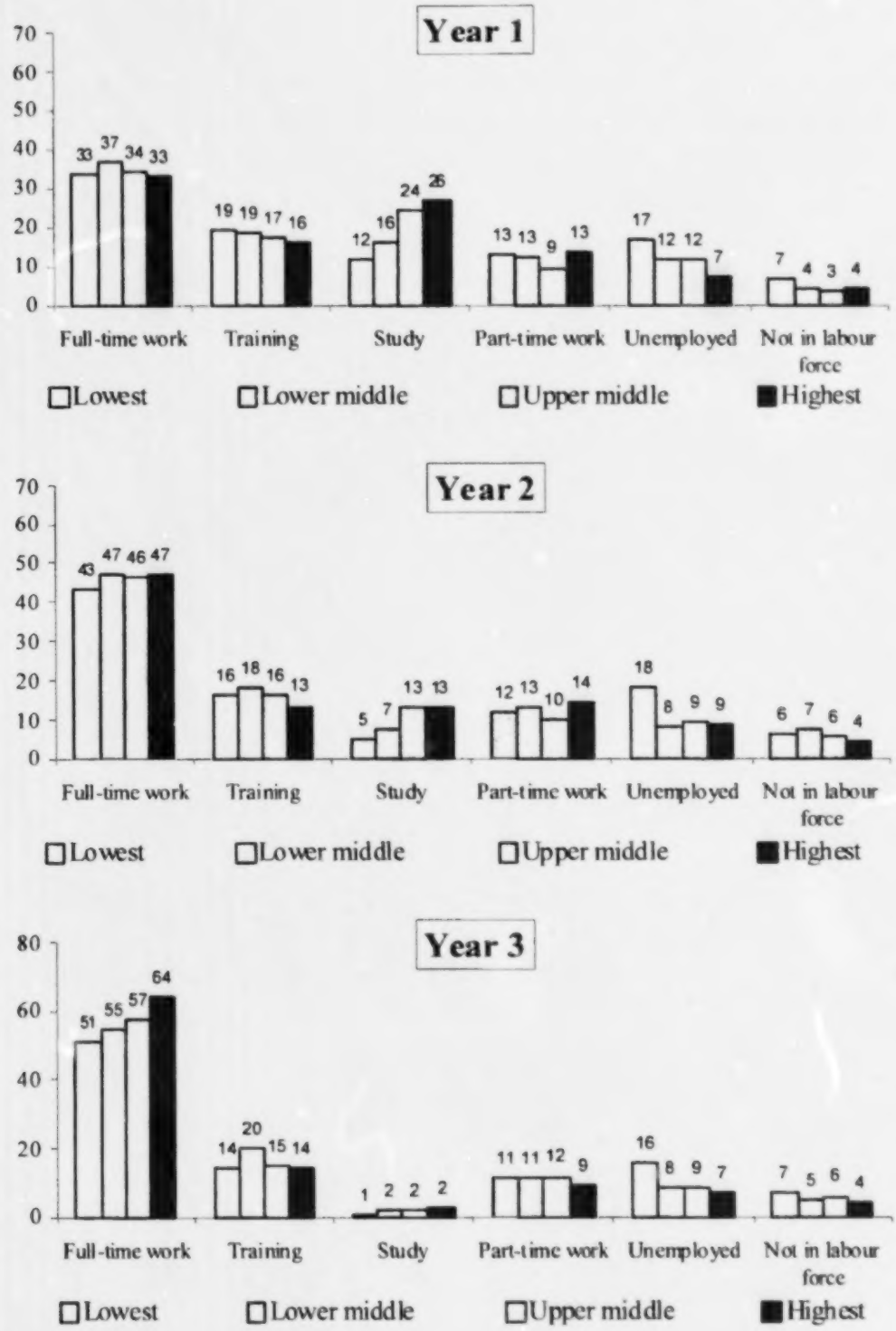
Figure 3.4 presents the distribution of the education and employment activities across the first three years for the younger sample classified according to quartiles of literacy and numeracy achievement at age 14. The results are for those who were in Year 10 the early 1990s and cover the first three post-school years. They show that in the first year, the rates of full-time employment were roughly the same for high achievers and low achievers (about one-third).

But there are large differences among groups in the transition to further study. This activity was much stronger among high achievers — in the first year, 26 per cent of the highest achievers as against 12 per cent of the lowest achievers. Low achievers (those in the lowest quartile of achievers at age 14) were much more likely to be unemployed. Seventeen per cent were out of work and looking for jobs compared to 12 per cent of the middle achievement groups and only about 7 per cent of those in the highest quartile of school achievers.

As the young people engaged in further study move into the labour force across the following two years, gaps begin to emerge in the rates of those who obtain full-time work. By the third year after leaving school, nearly four in five (78 per cent) of the high achievers (those in the highest quartile of achievers at age 14) are employed in full-time jobs or in apprenticeships or traineeships. Only 65 per cent of those who were low achievers in school were engaged in full-time work or training. Those with the weakest literacy and numeracy skills at age 14 (in the lowest quartile of achievers) were more likely to be unemployed than other groups (16 per cent compared to 7 per cent of the high achievers).

These patterns suggest that students who achieve strong literacy and numeracy skills in school are more likely to be successful in making the transition to full-time employment or training in the first few post-school years than students who do not achieve strong skills in those areas.

Figure 3.4 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity, by quartiles of school achievement and year-out-of-school



Differences based on social background

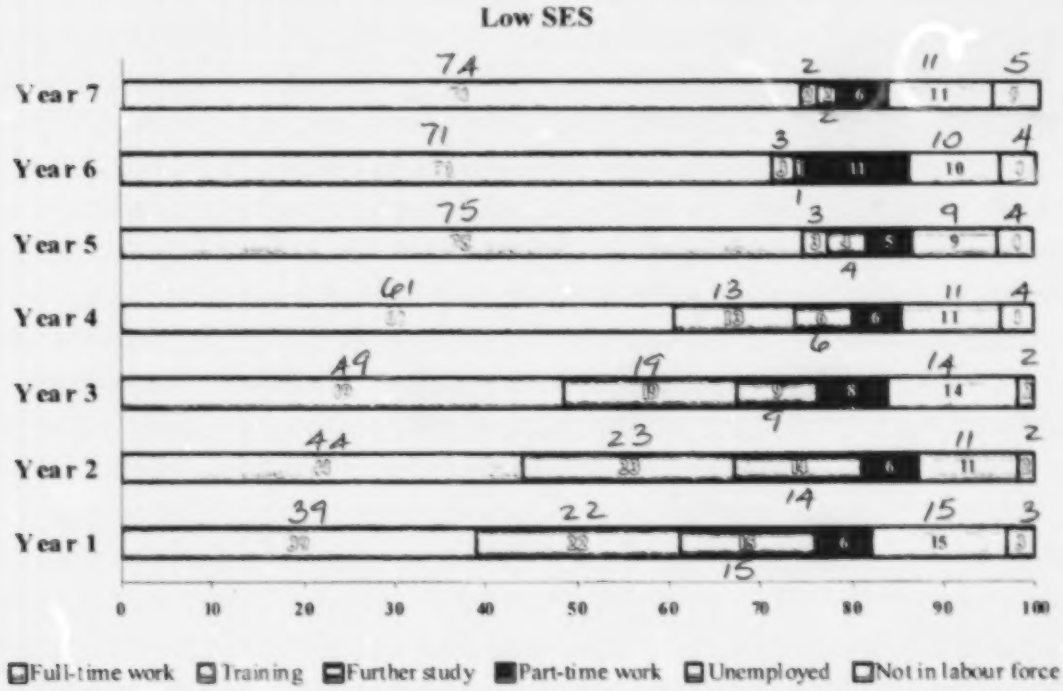
According to Figures 3.5 and 3.6, the striking difference in transition activities of young people from low and high SES backgrounds is participation in full-time study. For males, 24 per cent of those from high SES backgrounds were in full-time study in their first post-school year. The rate of participation remains at or above 20 per cent for each of the first three years. By comparison, the rate for low SES males is 15 per cent in the first post-school year falling to 9 per cent in the third year.

Low SES males are more likely than high SES males to obtain apprenticeships on entry to the labour market. Even so, by the fifth year, as apprentices and those in further study move into full-time jobs, low SES males more often are unemployed and less often in full-time work. About 11 per cent of the lower SES males were unemployed in the seventh year and 74 per cent were in full-time jobs. By comparison, only 5 per cent of the high SES males were unemployed and 86 per cent were in full-time employment.

Social differences in patterns of transition also exist for females. Apart from participation in further study, the main difference is the rate of not being engaged in any form of education, training or work (not in the labour force). In the first post-school year, females from high SES backgrounds are more likely to be not in the labour force than are females from low SES backgrounds — a gap of about 4 percentage points. By the seventh year the rates have reversed so that about 8 per cent of high SES females are not in the labour force compared to 19 per cent of those from low SES backgrounds. High SES females at this point are also more likely to be in full-time work (67 per cent as against 58 per cent). They are also slightly more likely to be unemployed (6 per cent compared to 4 per cent), but this is related to the higher proportion of low SES females no longer in the workforce.

The differences in aggregate patterns of activity suggest that young people from high SES origins more often settle into full-time work than their low SES counterparts. This is despite the fact that the target sample of young people in these analyses excludes the high proportion in the original sample from high SES backgrounds who gained university and diploma qualifications. It might have been anticipated that the result of this would be to reduce social differences in patterns of transition within the target sample and yet social background continues to exert an effect.

Figure 3.5 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity of males, by socioeconomic status, and year-out-of-school



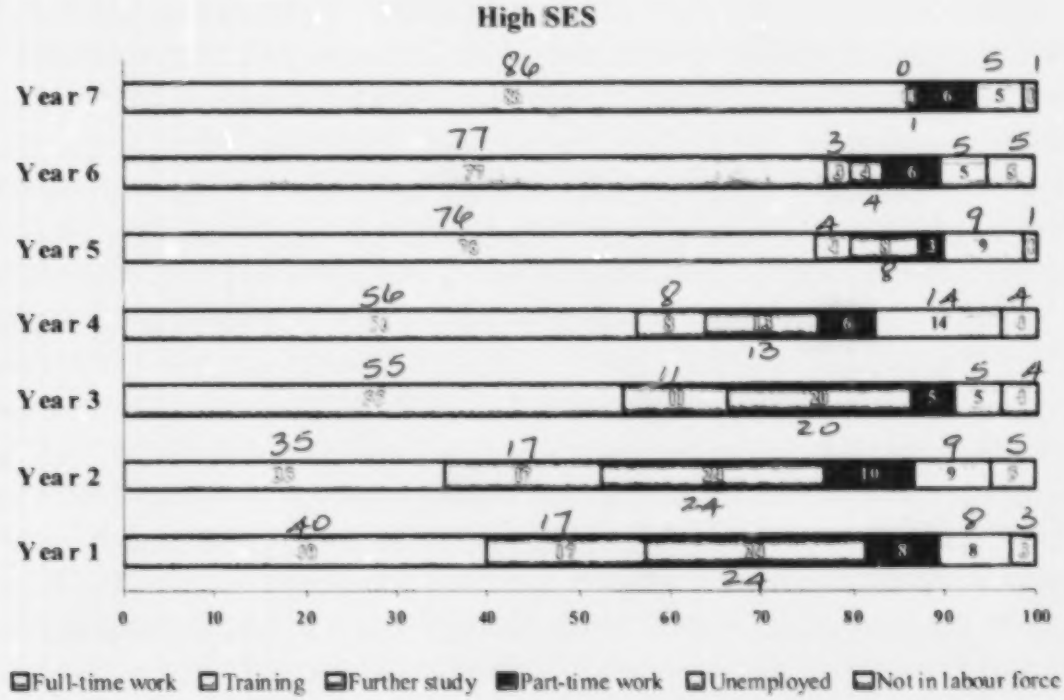


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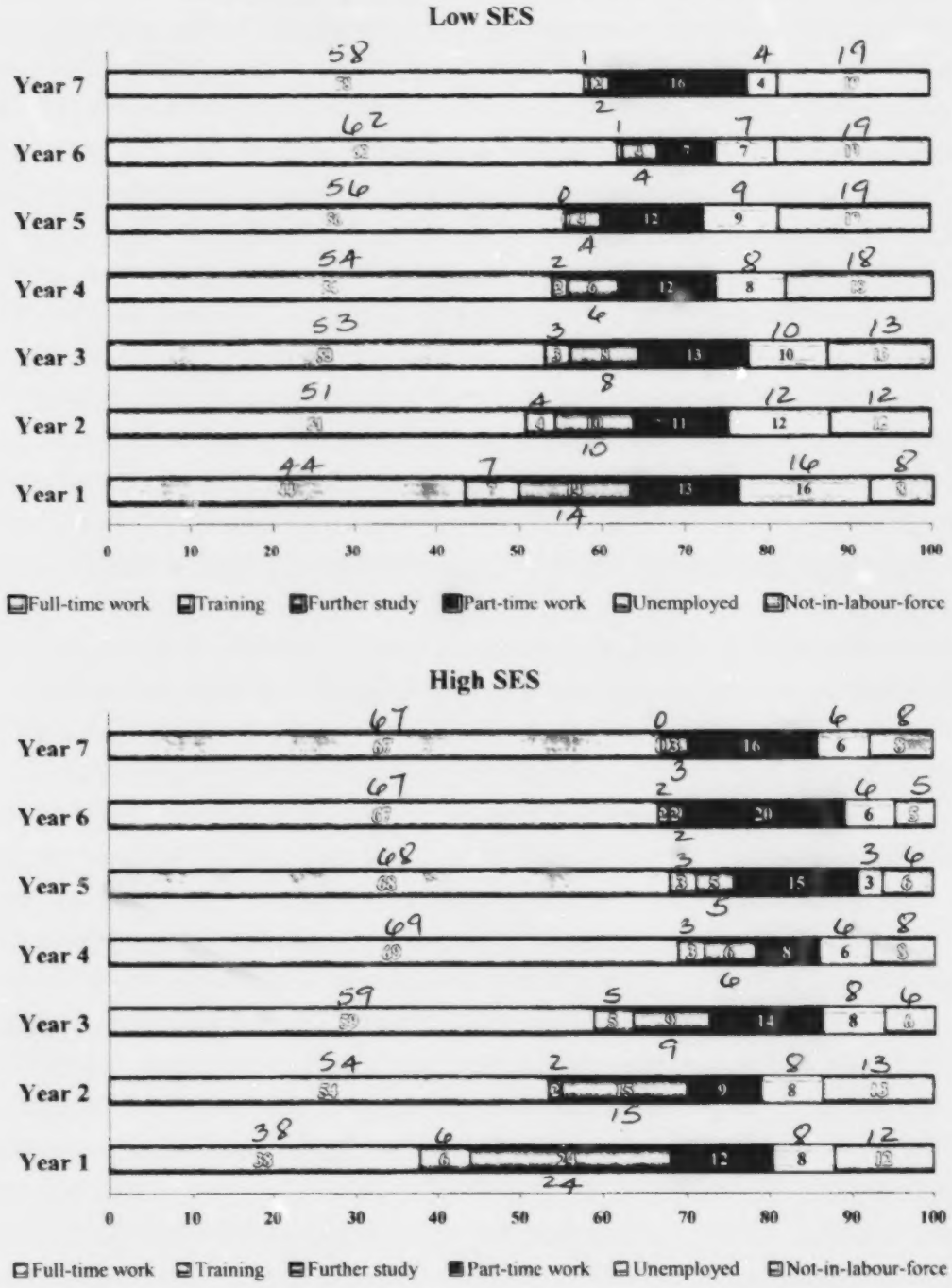
Figure 3.6 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity of females, by socioeconomic status, and year-out-of-school



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Differences based on rural or urban place of residence

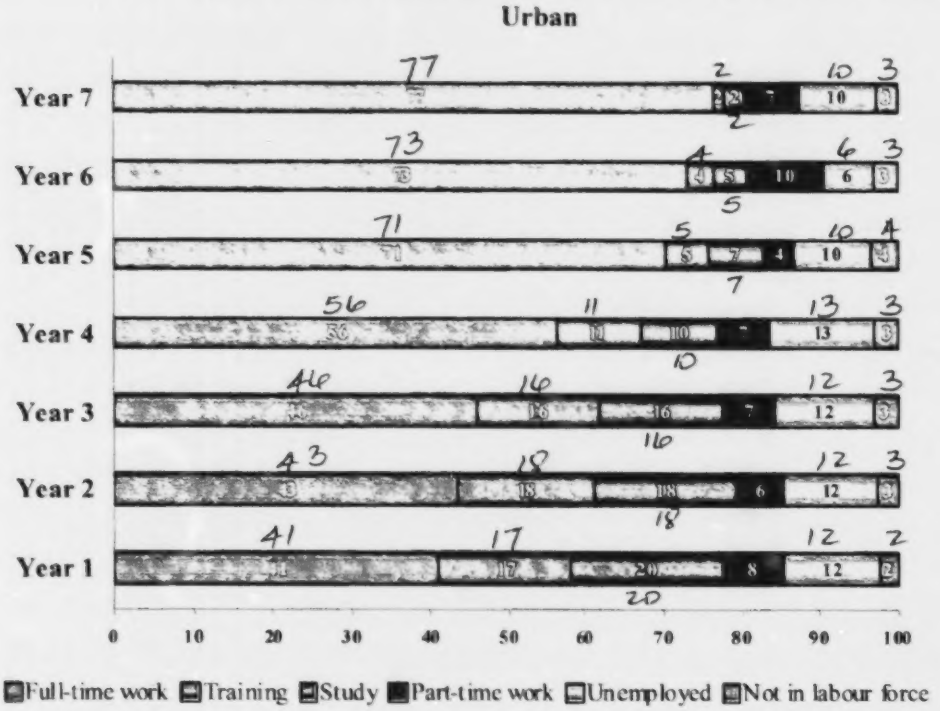
There are only fairly small differences in transition patterns evident among those who attended secondary school in rural compared to urban parts of Australia (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8).

Apprenticeships are more important to males who went to school in rural areas. In the first post-school year, over one-quarter are in apprenticeships or traineeships. The rate for those who went to secondary school in urban areas is 17 per cent. In conjunction with full-time jobs it means that for males from rural areas, about two-thirds (68 per cent) gain an apprenticeship or a full-time job in their first post-school year. The rate for males from urban areas is less than this — 58 per cent. Male urban residents are more likely to be in full-time study (20 per cent compared to 15 per cent).

The slight differences in transition patterns between males who went to secondary school in rural areas and those from urban areas hold across the seven years. Males who attended secondary school in rural areas have marginally higher rates of engagement in full-time jobs or in apprenticeships.

Similarly, for females, having been to secondary school in the rural parts of Australia does not appear to be a disadvantage in terms of obtaining full-time work. For each year, the rates of full-time employment are roughly the same for females from rural areas as they are for those from urban centres. However, there is a higher rate of participation in full-time study in the early post-school years among females who went to school in urban areas and, conversely, a higher rate of those not in the labour force among females from rural areas.

Figure 3.7 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity of males, by rural or urban place of residence and year-out-of-school



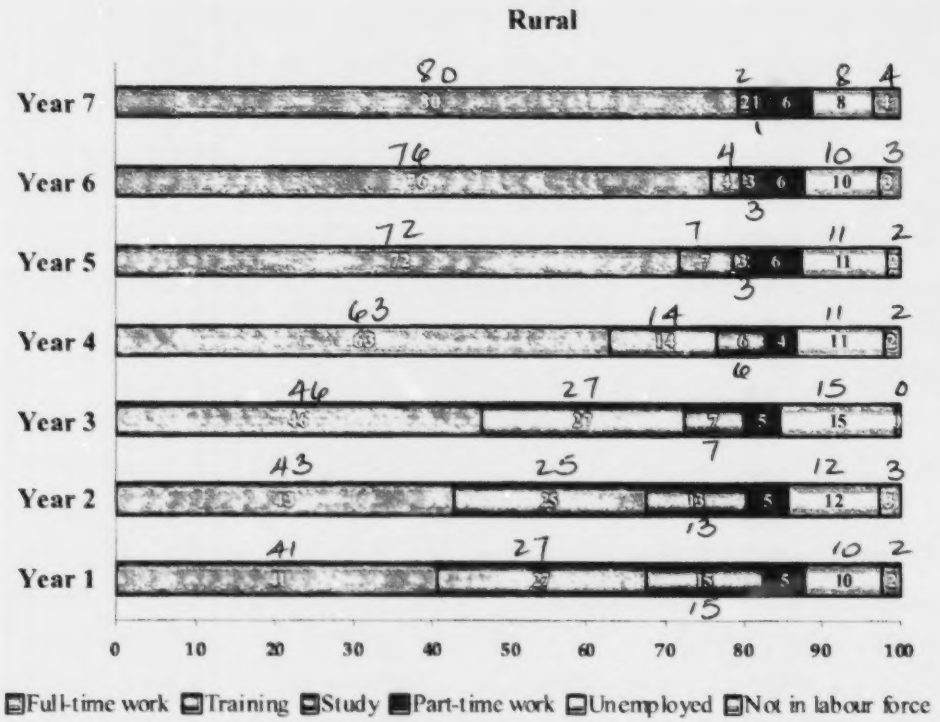


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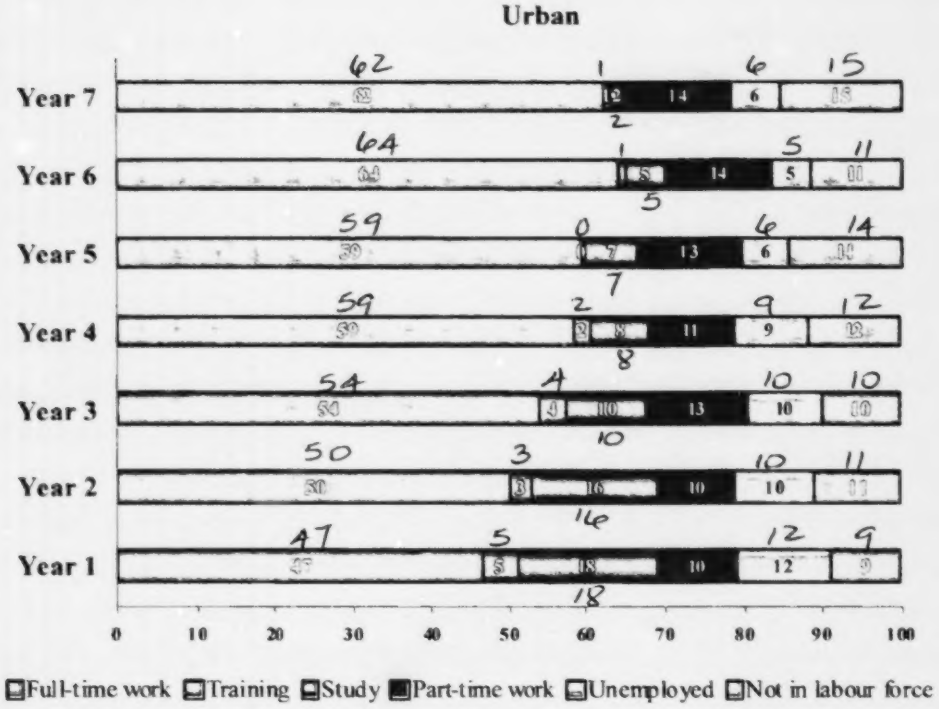
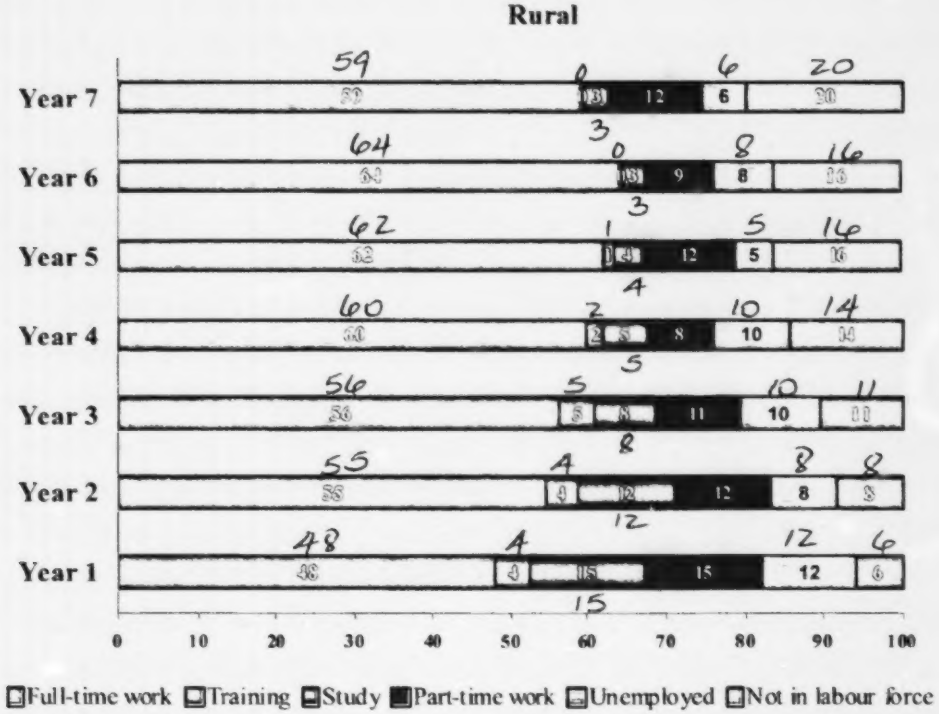
Figure 3.8 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity of females, by rural or urban place of residence and year-out-of-school





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Differences related to other background characteristics

Type of school attended

In the first three post-school years students attending government schools were more likely than those from Catholic or other private schools to enter full-time work or undertake vocational training through apprenticeships or traineeships (see Table 3.9A in Appendix 2). Private school students, particularly those from non-Catholic private schools were more likely to enter further study. By the seventh year, private school students were more likely than government school students to be in full-time work — 75 per cent for non-Catholic private school students, 72 per cent for Catholic school students and 69 per cent for government school students.

Ethnicity

Young people from non-English speaking backgrounds more often complete school and enter higher education than those from English-speaking backgrounds. Those who leave school and do not obtain university degrees or TAFE diplomas are still more likely than their counterparts from English-speaking backgrounds to pursue further study in the first few post-school years (see Table 3.10A in Appendix 2). Young people from English-speaking origins more often were successful in obtaining full-time employment and avoiding unemployment in each of the first seven post-school years.

Disability

Young people with disabilities experienced substantial difficulty in obtaining full-time work on entry to the labour market (see Table 3.11A in Appendix 2). Approximately one-third were in full-time work in the first three post-school years compared to almost one-half of those without disabilities. Those with reported disabilities were also much more likely to not enter the labour force altogether or to be unemployed, compared to those without a reported disability, in each of the initial seven post-school years.

4

Pathways to Full-time Employment

One of the main aims of most young people leaving school is to get a secure, full-time job. For some young people this can be achieved straight away while for others it may not be achieved even after several years. The current section identifies some of the main pathways that characterise the most common patterns of activities in the transition from school to employment. Information on the patterns of activity presented in the previous section, in conjunction with calendar data on week-by-week experiences, were used to identify the main pathways.

In this study, stable employment is measured by activity and duration and refers to three or more years of continuous full-time work. It is not limited to continuous employment in one job, as Klerman and Karoly (1995) have done in their study in the United States of the transition to stable employment. Rather, the emphasis is on full-time employment because job turnover in itself is not necessarily an impediment to career development.

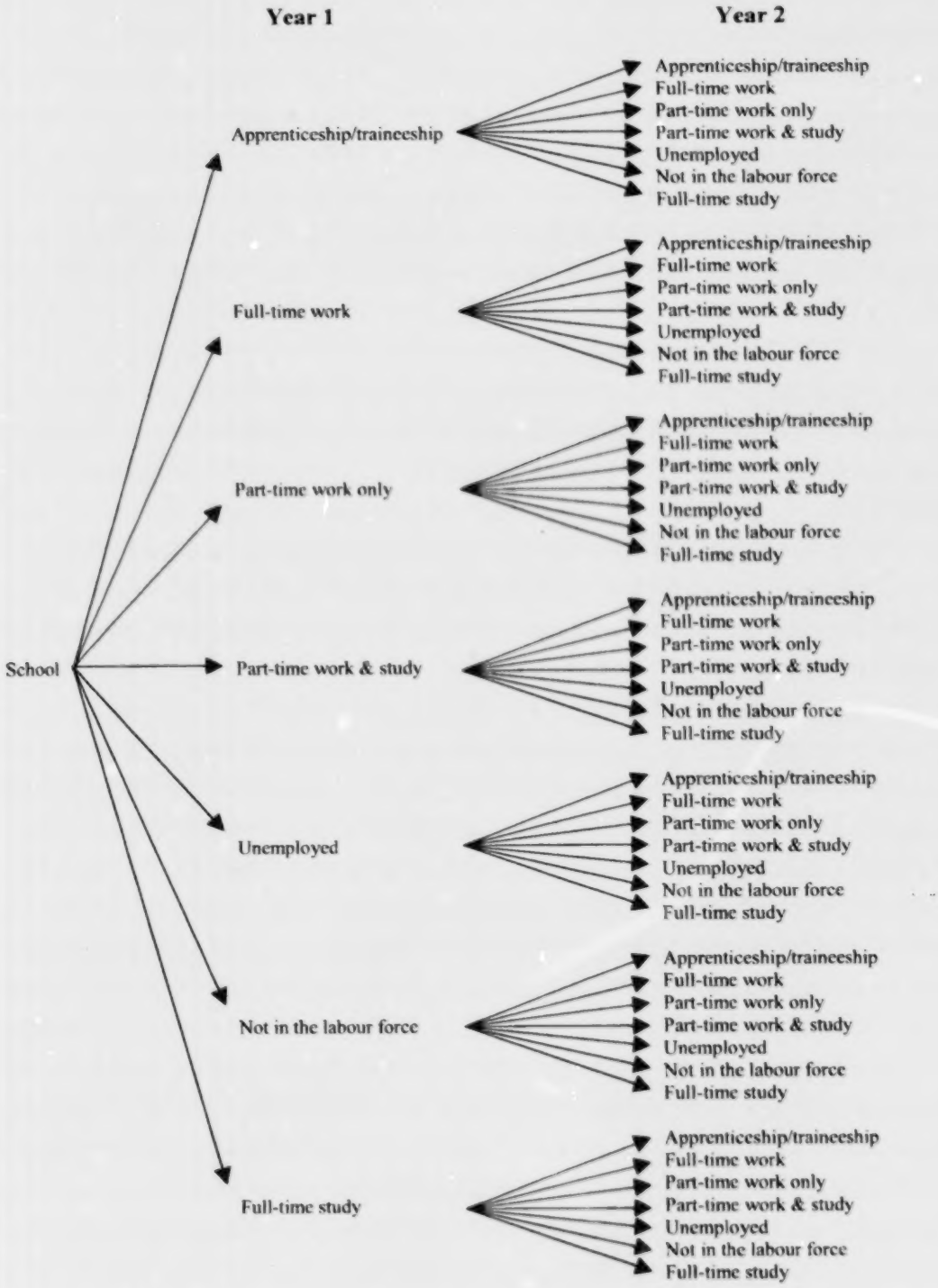
The diversity of post-school activities

The previous section presented a series of annual snapshots of education and employment activities. In that presentation of transition, no account was taken of individual status from year to year. It would be possible, for example, for an individual to have been employed full-time one year, unemployed the next, and in part-time work the following year. This pattern of transition is lost when the activities are presented as aggregate annual participation rates (for example, the per cent unemployed in the first post-school year, the per cent unemployed in the second year, and so on). The aggregate figures can conceal a considerable amount of movement between activities for different individuals. Previous research suggests that the period of transition is more volatile than the annual activity rates suggest (Sweet, 1991; Dwyer, 1996). That work tends to characterise the period following school, when young people are attempting to find their way in the labour market, as a period that can involve a high rate of job turnover, multiple employment spells, and interspersed periods of unemployment or further study while waiting for work.

As this suggests, there are many potential variations in the patterns of transition from school to work. To gain some measure of the extent to which the education and employment states change as young people progress from year to year, the annually recorded activities were treated as combinations. A model of what this would mean for the first two post-school years is presented in Figure 4.1. It shows that while in the first post-school year there are seven possible main activities, with progression to the second year this quickly multiplies to 49 possible patterns when combined with the first year's activity.

In theory, across seven years there are many thousands of different combinations of activities that each young person could engage in. Of course, not all of these patterns eventuate in practice because the activity in any one year influences the likelihood of undertaking that or a different activity in subsequent years.

Figure 4.1 Model of the possible patterns of combined activities over the first two post-school years



In looking at the combinations of activities across the whole seven years for the older sample in this study it is possible to identify 498 different patterns of activity in the transition from school. The largest number of these (415 patterns) are experienced by just one person. These individually unique patterns of activity are experienced by 42 per cent of the sample. A further 73 patterns of activity are each experienced by between 2 and 10 persons (involving 24 per cent of the sample). There are 9 slightly more common patterns of activity that each involve between 11 and 24 people, and which in total account for 15 per cent of the sample. By far the most common pattern of activity, which 20 per cent of the sample experience, is to be in full-time employment in each of the seven years.

The diverse patterns of activities evident from these data reinforce the point that young people's post-school pathways in Australia are highly individualised. It is unlikely, for example, that an equivalent analysis in a country such as Germany or Austria, where pathways are more institutionally structured, would reveal that around 80 per cent of the sample engage in almost 500 different patterns of activity over the first seven post-school years, most of them involving fewer than 10 people following the same pattern.

However, it is possible to abstract from the mass of detailed individualised data by grouping patterns of activity that are in fact very similar to each other. The next section elaborates the way in which similar patterns of activity can be combined to represent the main types of post-school pathways in Australia.

Identifying the main pathways from school to work

Using the seven-year patterns of activity it was possible to identify sets of common trajectories in the transition from school to work. For some people, this is relatively straightforward because across the whole period they were engaged in only one or two activities. For others, it is more difficult because of changes in activities over time. Even so, as Section 3 revealed, nearly 70 per cent of the sample was in full-time work in the seventh post-school year. By using the information on main annual activity, in conjunction with data from weekly calendars on the durations of activity, it was possible to establish the length of time in employment and the activities young people engaged in before being employed in full-time work. For those who were not in full-time work, it was also possible to identify the length of time in their current activity (unemployed, part-time work only, further full-time study, part-time work & study, not in the labour force) and the activities they had engaged in previously.

From this analysis it was possible to derive a set of common or similar patterns of activity which can be viewed as pathways. Eight pathways were defined. They comprise:

(1) Those who obtained a full-time job on leaving school and remained in full-time work across the seven years.

(2) Those who gained an apprenticeship or traineeship followed by full-time work.

(3) School leavers who participated in full-time further study before entering full-time employment.

(4) Young people who experienced a brief period (no more than 24 months) of unemployment, part-time work or not in the labour force, but were in full-time work for the remainder of the seven years.

(5) Young people who experienced an extended period or periods (3 to 4 years) unemployed, in part-time work or not in the labour force, but were in full-time employment for the rest of the time.

(6) Those who worked mainly part-time for the seven years (four years or more).

(7) Those who were unemployed for the majority of the time (four years or more).

(8) Young people who were mainly not in the labour force.

In terms of achieving the goal of stable employment, the first four pathways can be viewed as relatively successful transitions from school to work. They are relatively successful in that full-time employment is achieved mostly without lengthy periods of unemployment, or periods not in the labour force.

The last four pathways represent less successful transitions. While one of these involves a considerable period of full-time employment (the fifth pattern), it is achieved only after an extended period of time spent unemployed, in part-time work or not in the labour force. Entry to the labour market for those who experience this pathway is marked by an extended settling-in period. The final three pathways involve even more difficulty in securing full-time work. One of these includes young people who are mainly not in the labour force for the whole period.

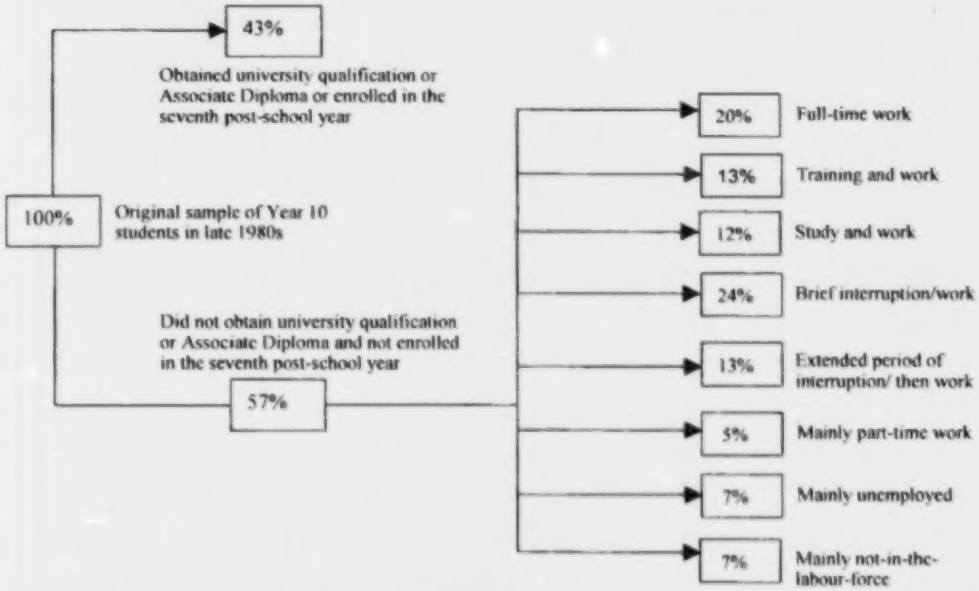
Figure 4.2 presents the percentage distribution of young people across the eight pathways. It also shows the percentage of the original sample that obtained (or was still working towards) university qualifications or a diploma. The percentage in each of the eight pathways relates only to the target sample used in the analyses, that is those who did not obtain or were not currently studying for university or TAFE diploma qualifications.

Figure 4.2 shows that one in five (20 per cent) school leavers in the late 1980s who did not obtain university or diploma qualifications obtained a job straight from school and worked full-time across the first seven post-school years. A further 13 per cent gained an apprenticeship or traineeship on leaving school and, on completion of their training, moved into full-time work. Similarly, there was a group involving 12 per cent who engaged in full-time study for a period of time on leaving school before moving into full-time work.

The largest single group of young people were those who obtained full-time work but experienced a relatively short interruption before doing so. For nearly one-quarter of the target sample (24 per cent), the transition to work was interrupted by a brief period of unemployment, part-time work or a period out of the labour force. Many of those who had undertaken further study, for example, experienced a brief period of unemployment or part-time work, on completion of their study, before gaining a full-time job.

For some others, the transition to full-time employment is achieved but with a more extended period or periods of interruption. In this pattern of transition, individuals spend up to four years unemployed, or in part-time work, or not in the labour force — or a combination of these. Their transition to full-time employment is interrupted for extended periods. This involved 13 per cent of the target sample.

Figure 4.2 Pathways of school leavers measured over the first seven post-school years



Note: The percentages in the right-hand boxes show the proportions of the target population in this report (school-leavers who did not obtain a tertiary qualification) in the various post-school pathways. These percentages sum to 100% of the target population. The percentages of the total Year 10 sample in these pathways are lower than these numbers in proportion to the size of the target population in the total Year 10 sample.

Approximately 5 per cent of the sample was engaged in mainly part-time work across the first seven post-school years. A further 7 per cent were mainly unemployed during their transition from school. (As a comparison point, the ABS estimated that in 1993 around 4 per cent of the 15-19 year-olds in the labour force were long-term unemployed, that is unemployed for 52 weeks or more – see ABS 1994. Although the ABS measure is conceptually different to that used in this report, it is of the same order.) There was a further group of school leavers who were mainly not in the labour force and not in study from the time of leaving school. This also involved 7 per cent of the target sample.

Across the target sample, around 70 per cent could be considered to have made a "successful" transition from school to employment, in that they experienced 3 or more years of continuous full-time employment. About 20 per cent (the final 3 pathways) have had a potentially more problematic experience, whereas around 13 per cent could be considered to have had a more mixed experience.

5

Characteristics of Participants in Different Pathways

The pathways from school to work can vary widely among different groups. This section presents information on who participates in the different pathways defined in Section 4.

Gender

In comparing the pathways of males and females it was found that females were more likely to enter full-time work without further training, but they were also more likely to spend time neither working nor in study.

As shown in Figure 5.1, the percentage of females who were continuously employed on leaving school was 6 points higher than for men. The main reason for this is the relatively high rate at which males enter vocational training programs — apprenticeships and traineeships — which lead to full-time work. This involves more than one in five males compared to less than one in 20 females.

When the percentages of males and females in the first four pathways leading to full-time employment — full-time work, training then work, study and work, brief interruption and work — are added together it shows that three in four (76 per cent) males make relatively smooth transitions to full-time employment compared to about three in five (62 per cent) females. Part of the reason for this difference is related to the number of females who are not in the labour force for most of the seven years following school — 13 per cent compared to just 1 per cent of males. The much higher fraction of women neither working nor in study is related to the number who are out of the labour force as a result of pregnancy and child-rearing responsibilities, which is discussed more fully in Section 6.

Females are also more likely to be reliant on part-time rather than full-time work in the transition from school. The rate is double that for males — 6 per cent compared to 3 per cent.

Early school leavers

Figure 5.2 presents the distribution of the sample of males across the eight pathways for early school leavers and then school completers. The results show that early school leavers much more often rely on apprenticeships in the transition to full-time work, whereas Year 12 completers more often invest in further study. Nearly one in three (30 per cent) early school leavers obtained apprenticeships on leaving school and then moved into full-time work, compared to one in six Year 12 leavers (16 per cent). Conversely, school completers were six times more likely to enter further study and then full-time work than were early school leavers (17 per cent as against 3 per cent).

Figure 5.1 Pathways of school leavers, by gender

Note: See note to Figure 4.2

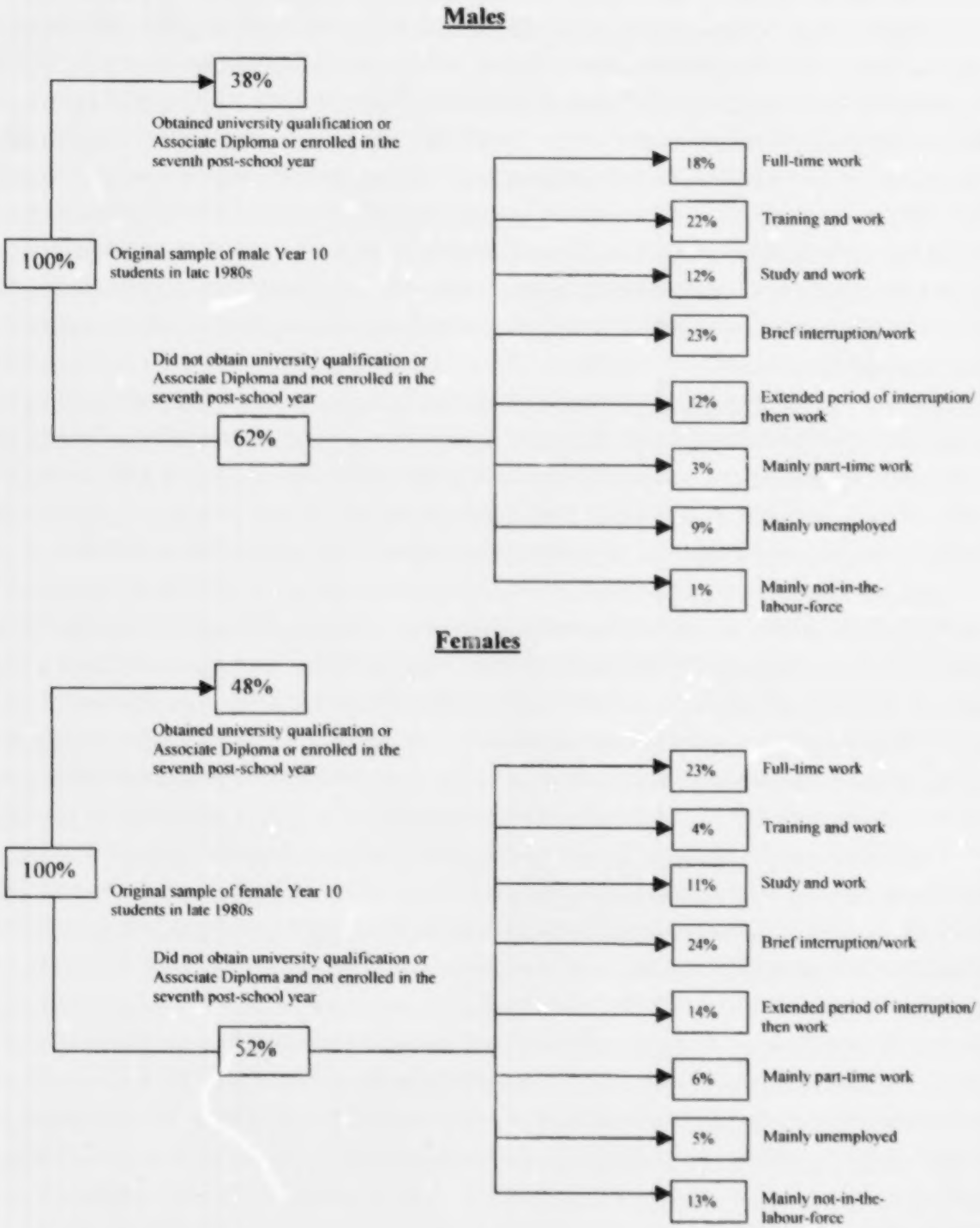

Males
38%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Original sample of male Year 10 students in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
62%
18% Full-time work
22% Training and work
12% Study and work
23% Brief interruption/work
12% Extended period of interruption/ then work
3% Mainly part-time work
9% Mainly unemployed
1% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force
Females
48%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Original sample of female Year 10 students in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
52%
23% Full-time work
4% Training and work
11% Study and work
24% Brief interruption/work
14% Extended period of interruption/ then work
6% Mainly part-time work
5% Mainly unemployed
13% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force

Figure 5.2 Pathways of male school leavers, by school attainment

Note: See note to Figure 4.2

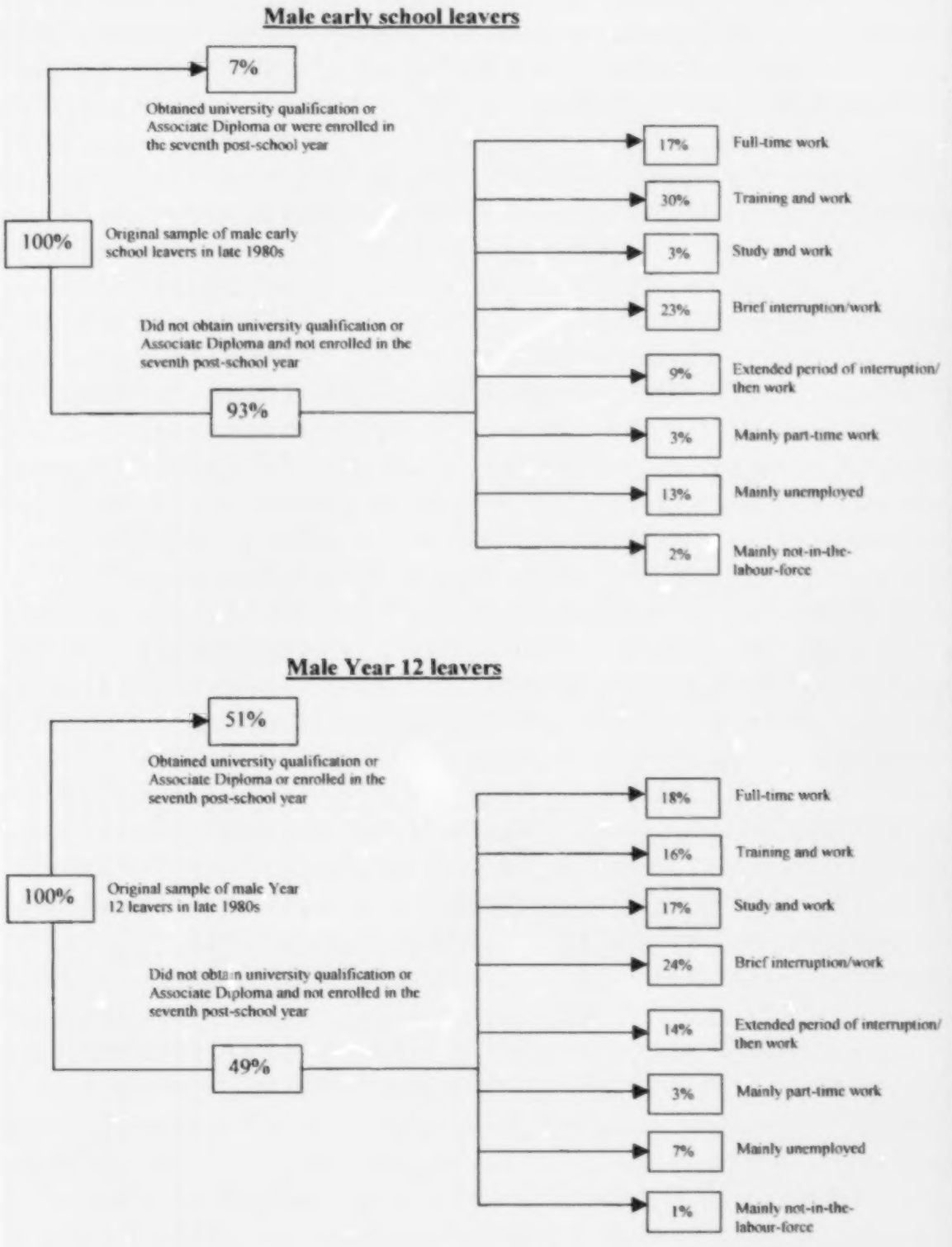

Male early school leavers
7%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or were enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Original sample of male early school leavers in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
93%
17% Full-time work
30% Training and work
3% Study and work
23% Brief interruption/work
9% Extended period of interruption/ then work
3% Mainly part-time work
13% Mainly unemployed
2% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force
Male Year 12 leavers
51%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Original sample of male Year 12 leavers in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
49%
18% Full-time work
16% Training and work
17% Study and work
24% Brief interruption/work
14% Extended period of interruption/ then work
3% Mainly part-time work
7% Mainly unemployed
1% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force

Table 5.1 Percentage distribution of main activity across the first seven post-school years, by highest level of school attainment

Pathway	Highest school attainment			
	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
		Males		
Full-time work	21	19	14	18
Training/work	14	31	34	16
Further study/work	0	2	4	17
Brief interruption/work	25	20	26	24
Extended interruption/work	14	11	6	14
Mainly part-time work	4	4	3	3
Mainly unemployment	21	12	12	7
Mainly not-in-labour-force	0	2	2	1
		Females		
Full-time work	5	20	24	25
Training/work	0	4	4	4
Further study/work	0	1	2	14
Brief interruption/work	11	25	29	24
Extended interruption/work	16	13	16	15
Mainly part-time work	5	7	7	6
Mainly unemployment	5	6	5	6
Mainly not-in-labour-force	58	25	14	7
		All persons		
Full-time work	15	20	18	21
Training/work	9	19	20	10
Further study/work	0	2	4	18
Brief interruption/work	19	22	27	23
Extended interruption/work	15	12	11	14
Mainly part-time work	4	5	5	5
Mainly unemployment	15	9	8	6
Mainly not-in-labour-force	23	12	8	3

Early school leavers were much more likely to experience long term unemployment on entry to the labour market. Over 12 per cent of non-completers experienced four or more years of unemployment in the first seven post-school years. The rate for Year 12 leavers was 7 per cent.

For females, the most striking difference is in the rates of those who are mainly not in the labour force (see Figure 5.2A in Appendix 2). The fraction of female early school leavers who are neither in paid work nor study is three times that of Year 12 completers — 23 per cent of female early leavers are not in the labour force for most of the initial seven post-school years compared to 7 per cent of Year 12 leavers.

The percentages presented for early school leavers in Figures 5.2 and 5.2A are aggregate figures and take no account of the year-level from which young people left school. The numbers of years of schooling make a big difference to the transition experiences. Comparing across the columns of Table 5.1, it is clear that the transition to full-time work becomes smoother as the years of education acquired before leaving school increases.

The likelihood of experiencing long term unemployment and not being able to secure full-time work is much greater among those who leave school before Year 10. Over 20 per cent of male Year 9 leavers were unemployed for four years or more. The rates fall for each additional year of schooling with the unemployed rate for those who complete Year 12 well below the Year 10 rate.

Among female early leavers, the rates of those who obtain full-time work on leaving school, or find work after a stint of further study or training, increases with each additional year of schooling. The change from Year 9 to Year 10 is particularly striking. Nearly 60 per cent of females exiting school from Year 9 were mainly not in the labour force across the first seven post-school years, compared to 25 per cent of those exiting at Year 10.

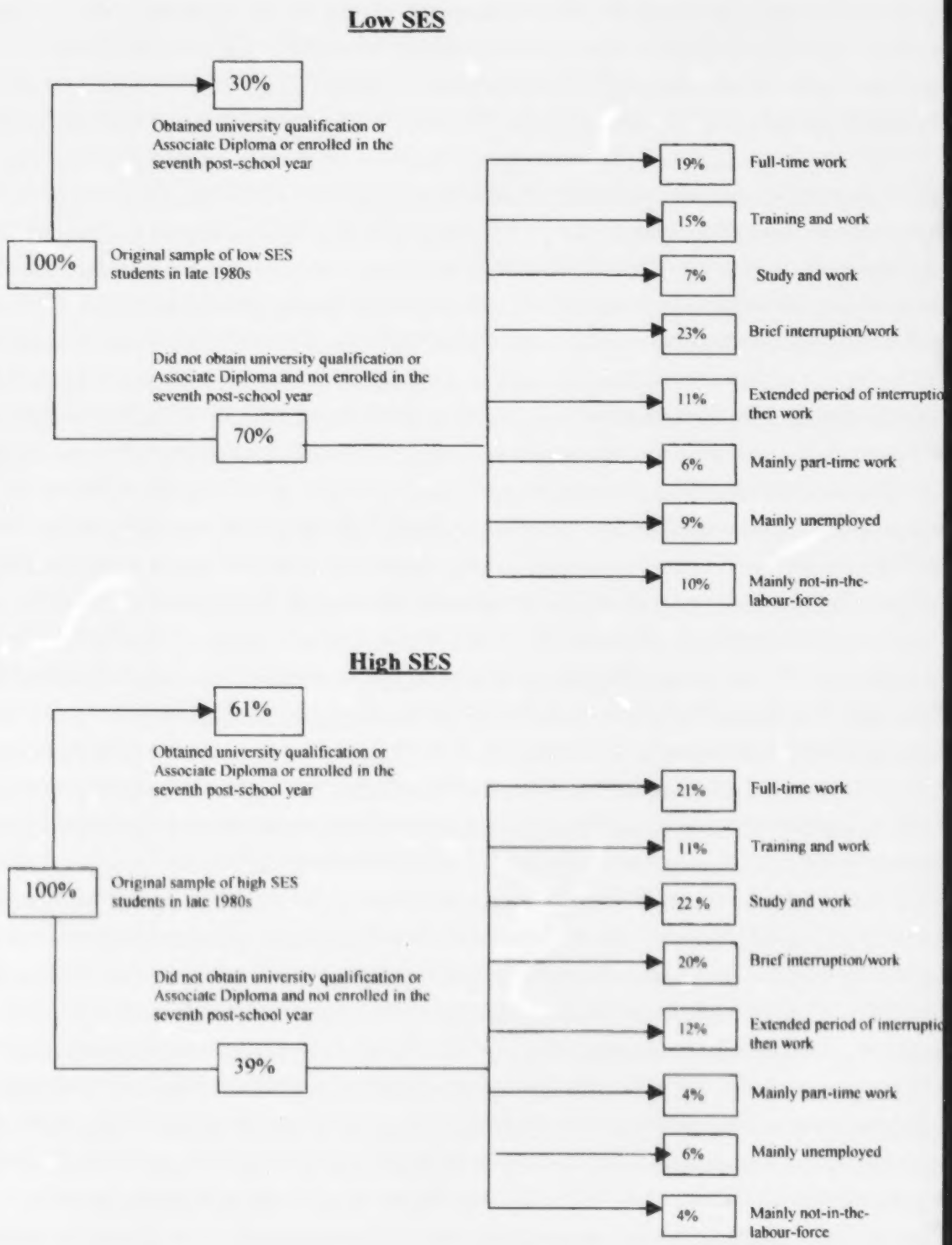
From these patterns it would appear that the costs of non-completion of school are high. Long-term unemployment and much lower rates of participation in further study more often mark the pathways of early leavers than of school completers.

Socioeconomic status

Social background is strongly related to whether or not young people take the higher education path or not on leaving school. It is also related to the types of experiences young people have in the transition from school to work. Figure 5.3 shows that young people from high SES backgrounds rather than low SES backgrounds more often moved from school into further study and then into full-time work. Approximately 22 per cent of school leavers from high SES origins did this compared to about 7 per cent of their low SES counterparts. Low SES students were more likely to gain apprenticeships leading into full-time work.

Figure 5.3 Pathways of school leavers, by socioeconomic status

Note: See note to Figure 4.2


Low SES
30%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Original sample of low SES students in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
70%
19% Full-time work
15% Training and work
7% Study and work
23% Brief interruption/work
11% Extended period of interruptio then work
6% Mainly part-time work
9% Mainly unemployed
10% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force
High SES
61%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Original sample of high SES students in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
39%
21% Full-time work
11% Training and work
22 % Study and work
20% Brief interruption/work
12% Extended period of interruptio then work
4% Mainly part-time work
6% Mainly unemployed
4% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force

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The pathways of low SES and high SES school leavers suggest that more low SES students experience difficulties in making the transition to full-time work. Ten per cent fewer low SES leavers participate in one of the first four pathways - those involving full-time work, training and full-time work, further study and full-time work or full-time work following a brief period of unemployment or part-time work. They are more likely to participate in the pathways involving long-term unemployment or not in the labour force.

Rural or urban place of residence

There are few differences in the pathways of young people who went to secondary school in rural areas compared to those from urban centres (see Table 5.2). The most common pathway for young people from both rural and urban areas is to move from school into full-time work after experiencing a brief period of unemployment or part-time work. The next most common is to move directly into full-time work on leaving school and remain in full-time employment across the seven years.

One difference between rural and urban school leavers is in the numbers who move into apprenticeships and then into full-time work. This pathway was experienced by about 16 per cent of the sample members who went to secondary school in rural areas compared to 12 per cent of those fromurban centres. This was offset by the higher frequency of young people from urban areas moving into full-time work after a period of further study.

Table 5.2 Percentage distribution of main education and employment activity across the first seven post-school years, by selected background characteristics

Characteristic	Pathway							
	Full-time work	Training/ work	Study / work	Brief interruption/ work	Extended interruption / work	Mainly part-time work	Mainly unemployed	Mainly NILF
Residence at secondary school								
Urban	20	12	14	24	12	5	7	6
Rural	21	16	8	23	14	4	7	8
Ethnicity								
Australian-born	21	14	11	23	13	5	7	7
Other-English	24	11	10	25	13	5	8	4
Non-English-speaking	13	13	16	29	13	4	9	3
School type								
Government	20	14	10	23	13	4	8	7
Catholic	23	10	16	27	11	7	3	3
Independent	14	9	28	21	13	3	7	6
Disability								
No disability	21	14	12	24	13	4	7	5
Disability	13	6	7	20	15	8	13	18

Ethnicity

In one respect, the figures in Table 5.2 suggest that young people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the target sample experience more difficulties in making the transition from school to full-time work than those from English-speaking backgrounds. Far fewer move from school directly into full-time work (12 per cent compared to 21 per cent of those with Australian-born parents). More of them experience a brief period of unemployment or part-time work before moving into continuous full-time employment.

In another respect, the figures suggest that they do not experience more difficulties in the transition to full-time work than young people from English-speaking backgrounds do. While fewer move directly from school into long term full-time employment, a higher proportion enter further study leading on to full-time work.

Type of school attended

According to the figures in Table 5.2, one of the main differences in the pathways taken by government school and private school students is in the take-up of training (apprenticeships, traineeships) or further study. Over one-quarter of leavers who attended private non-Catholic schools participated in further study before moving into full-time employment. The rate for those from Catholic schools was about 16 per cent and for those from government schools about 10 per cent. More typical for government school students was entry to apprenticeship training leading to full-time work or to directly enter full-time employment.

Disability

Young people with disabilities experience substantial difficulty in making the transition from school to full-time work. Many do not enter the labour force at all over the 7 year period — 18 per cent compared to 5 per cent of those without a disability. But even if this difference is taken into account, those with a disability struggle to secure full-time employment. The proportion of those who make relatively successful transitions to stable employment (those who achieve full-time employment either directly on leaving school, with an initial period of training or further study or with a brief period of unemployment or part-time work) is much lower among young people with a disability. About 46 per cent of young people with disabilities did so compared to 71 per cent of the non-disabled.

The transition from school for young people with disabilities more often involved long-term unemployment (13 per cent as against 7 per cent). They also more often entered a pathway involving mainly part-time work (8 per cent compared to 4 per cent) or full-time work achieved after lengthy periods of unemployment, part-time work or not in the labour force (15 per cent as against 13 per cent).

Likelihood of participating in the different pathways from school to work

The rates of participation in different pathways vary for young people from different backgrounds. But what are the rates for different groups after controlling for the effects of other influences, and do the differences between groups vary significantly? To look at this, predicted probabilities or chances of participating in each of the pathways were

calculated from multivariate logistic regression analyses. The predicted chances for different groups of young people of participating in different pathways are presented in Table 5.3. The probabilities are expressed as percentages and represent chances compared to a comparison group comprising males with Australian-born parents, from low SES origins, who had attended government schools in rural areas, who had completed Year 12, and who did not have a reported disability. The comparison group provides a basis for assessing the influence on post-school pathways of background factors that feature in educational policy and debate.

The table highlights some important differences among groups of young people. A major difference between males and females is the pathway involving training and full-time work. All else equal, females have significantly lower chances compared to males of taking this pathway. But women have significantly higher chances of entering the pathway involving mainly part-time work. They also have a greater likelihood compared to boys of a transition which involves an extended settling-in period of unemployment, part-time work or periods out of the labour force before finding full-time work. The other major difference between males and females is the pathway involving extended durations not in the labour force. Females have a much greater likelihood of this pathway.

Early school leavers are significantly more likely than Year 12 graduates to take a pathway from school to work involving apprenticeship training (a probability of 33 per cent as against a rate of 21 per cent for the comparison group). They are far less likely to undertake further study — a likelihood of 2 per cent for early leavers of participating in this pathway compared to a likelihood of 12 per cent for the comparison group. Early leavers are significantly more likely to be in the pathway involving unemployment (chances of 13 per cent compared to 10 per cent for the comparison group) and of being not in the labour force.

Social background is related to differences in the likelihood of participating in the further study and work pathway. Young people from high SES backgrounds have significantly more likelihood of entering this pathway than those from low SES backgrounds (represented in the comparison group). This difference also holds for type of school attended, with students from private schools more likely to make the transition to employment after undertaking full-time further study.

The pathways of young people with disabilities are also substantially different to those without a disability. Those with a reported disability are significantly more likely than those without a disability to enter the pathway involving mainly unemployment (the chances are 20 per cent compared to 10 per cent for those without a disability) or not being in the labour force (chances of 4 per cent as against 1 per cent). Those with a disability also have significantly lower chances of experiencing the pathway of continuous full-time employment or apprenticeship training and full-time work.

Table 5.3 Predicted probabilities of participating in a pathway expressed as percentages, by selected background characteristics

Attribute	Pathway								
	Full-time work	Training / work	Study/ work	Brief interruption/ work	Extended interruption work	Mainly part-time work	Mainly unemployed	Mainly NILF	Total
Comparison group+	18.6	21.2	1.9	23.7	10.2	3.3	10.1	0.8	100
Female	25.6**	3.3***	9.3	26.5	14.2*	8.1***	5.8**	7.2***	100
Early school leaver	16.2	33.4**	1.8***	22.3	7.6	3.4	12.7*	2.5***	100
Live in rural area	18.5	25.6	9.0	21.2	12.2	2.4	10.1	1.1	100
High SES	19.3	15.0	25.3***	19.9	11.0	2.3	6.8	0.4	100
Upper middle SES	16.8	16.7	19.3***	21.9	16.3**	2.8	5.9	0.3**	100
Lower middle SES	25.2	19.0	13.1	26.1	9.6	2.0	4.6**	0.4**	100
Catholic school	20.9	17.3	17.9*	25.4	8.0	5.6	4.6*	0.4	100
Non-Cath private	14.6	14.6	25.9***	22.3	10.2	3.0	8.5	1.0	100
Disability	13.2*	9.7**	9.0	21.8	14.6	7.2*	20.3*	4.2***	100
Non-English-speaking b'ground	10.6**	19.6	13.1	27.1	11.7	2.8	14.2*	0.8	100

+ The control group on which the multivariate logistic regression analysis was based includes low SES males without a reported disability from government schools in rural areas, who had completed Year 12, and who had Australian-born parents.

* $p<0.10$ ** $p<0.05$ *** $p<0.01$

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6

Experiences Associated with Different Pathways

This section presents information on the labour market experiences of young people associated with the different pathways from school to work. In the discussion that follows, the transition experiences are examined in terms of the number of jobs held, average weekly earnings, type of occupation, participation in employer-provided training, participation in labour market programs, role of part-time work, spells of unemployment, and the activities of those not in the labour force. This section also looks at the issue of whether the experiences young people have very early in their careers — in the first year — have lasting effects on their employment prospects.

Number of jobs held

Table 6.1 shows the number of jobs held by young people according to their main pathway in the transition from school to work. It shows that labour market entry for young people often involves a large turnover of jobs. For example, 40 per cent of those in the pathways presented in Table 6.1 had six or more jobs over the initial seven post-school years while 10 per cent had 10 or more jobs. The average number of jobs held in the first seven years after leaving school for the whole sample was five.

There are sharp differences in the number of jobs held during the early career according to the pathway from school to work. The highest rate of job turnover, on average, is experienced by those who spend extended periods of time (up to four years) in unemployment, part-time work or time not in the labour force before finding full-time work. More than one in two members of this group changed jobs six or more times and nearly one in eight changed jobs ten or more times. This high rate of job turnover may reflect multiple spells in part-time jobs in the search for stable full-time work.

Table 6.1 Percentage distribution of the number of jobs held across the first seven post-school years, by pathway from school to work

	Pathway						
Number of jobs held	Full-time work	Training/ work	Study/ work	Brief interruption/work	Extended interruption/ work	Mainly part-time work	Total
1	20	19	10	5	4	6	11
2	16	17	13	15	11	8	14
3	18	17	13	12	12	12	14
4	10	8	9	12	9	12	10
5	14	12	12	13	7	10	12
6	9	7	9	12	16	14	11
7	3	8	8	8	9	10	7
8	3	5	9	8	9	6	6
9	3	2	4	5	7	12	5
10	1	1	2	4	3	2	2
11+	3	4	11	8	13	11	8
Average	4.0	4.3	5.7	5.5	6.4	6.1	5.2

The group whose early labour market career is marked predominantly by part-time work also experiences a high rate of job turnover. The average number of jobs for this group was 6.1 and 54 per cent turned over 5 or more jobs. Over 13 per cent changed jobs 10 or more times. The high rate of job turnover reflects the difficulties many of this group share in attempting to find full-time work. Nearly two-thirds of this group reported actively searching for full-time jobs in the years in which they were in part-time work. Given the length of time in part-time work rather than in unemployment it suggests that, for these young people, having a job is better than not having a job, even if that job is part-time.

The young people with the lowest average number of jobs are those who are in full-time employment during their early careers (average of four jobs). Compared to other pathways there are fewer job changes. Yet even for this group, entering and remaining in full-time work after leaving school is not a guarantee of job stability. In the previous sections it was reported that about 20 per cent of young people move directly from school into full-time work and remain employed full-time across their early labour market careers. Despite the apparently smooth transition, this pathway can involve numerous job changes. As Table 6.1 reveals, only about one in five young people who were in full-time employment across the initial seven post-school years remained in the same job for that period. This represented just 4 per cent of the total target sample. Most had changed jobs at least two, three or even four times (44 per cent). Over 30 per cent had changed employment more than five times and 4 per cent had changed jobs ten or more times within the seven years.

These results suggest that many young people, despite extended periods of full-time employment in their early labour market careers, still experience a high rate of job turnover. This rate of job turnover, however, is much less than that experienced by those who enter further study and then full-time work, or those who experience brief or extended periods without full-time work. Further work is needed to better understand the nature of job turnover by young people and the extent to which it reflects experience-seeking and drive, or less positive aspects of the youth job market.

Average earnings

Previous research has suggested that the number of years of labour market experience is strongly related to weekly earnings. For this reason, at age 19 or 20, early school leavers often receive higher average earnings than those who remain to Year 12 (Rumberger and Lamb, 1998). The results of the current analysis show that while in the early years this may be true, the financial benefits of education or further training soon outweigh the benefits of time in the workforce (Table 6.2). Among males, those who had invested in further study on leaving school — the majority of whom had completed Year 12 — had the highest average weekly earnings seven years from the end of secondary school. (The three pathways groups with only small numbers in full-time employment in the seventh year are not shown in Table 6.2.) This was $30 a week (or 5 per cent) more than those whose main pathway was full-time work without further study or training. Those who gained apprenticeships or traineeships after leaving school also had higher average weekly earnings than those who worked full-time continuously over the seven years, but without further training or study.

Table 6.2 Mean weekly earnings of those in full-time work seven years after leaving school, by pathway and gender

Pathway	Mean weekly earnings		
	Males	Females	Persons
	$	$	$
Full-time work	558	495	522
Training/work	579	515	570
Further study/work	588	482	543
Brief interruption/work	527	475	503
Extended interruption/work	470	428	449

For each pathway from school to work, men consistently reported higher earnings than women. Among those in full-time work, for example, men earned $558, on average, while women earned $495. The average weekly pay across all pathways for men was $544 compared to $479 for women.

The lowest levels of pay for both males and females were reported by those who were in full-time work but who had experienced difficulties in obtaining full-time jobs in the transition from school to work. The gap in average weekly pay between those who had been unemployed, out of the labour force or in part-time work for up to four years and those who had obtained continuous full-time work on leaving school was $88 (or 16 per cent) for males and $68 (or 14 per cent) for females.

These results suggest that there is a deferred as well as immediate financial penalty to those who do not settle into full-time work, further study or training on leaving school.

Occupation

Apart from time spent in employment, one of the major reasons for differences in levels of pay is the variation in the types of jobs young people hold. Table 6.3 shows that one-in-four males, and one-in-five females, who experienced some difficulties in securing full-time work (those who had an extended interruption to their transition from school to work), were working as labourers seven years after leaving school. This was more than twice the rate for males who worked continuously full-time or who did further study, and three times the rate for females.

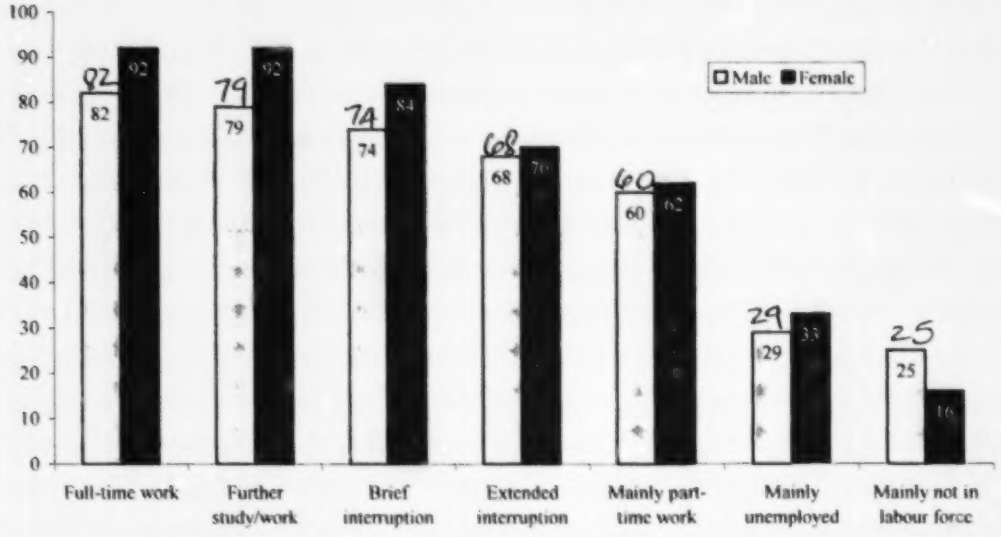
Table 6.3 Type of occupation seven years after leaving school, by pathway and gender

Occupation	Pathway				
	Full-time work	Training/ Work	Further study/work	Brief interruption/ work	Extended interruption/ work
			Males		
Upper professional/managerial	17	3	14	3	8
Lower professional/managerial	4	1	14	9	9
Technical	9	5	14	7	3
Skilled trades	12	66	17	28	25
Clerical	11	1	6	5	6
Sales and service	23	5	19	18	22
Plant/machine operators	12	7	6	12	3
Labourers	12	10	10	19	25
			Females		
Upper professional/managerial	9	0	6	8	5
Lower professional/managerial	5	5	10	6	2
Technical	5	0	8	8	3
Skilled trades	2	55	4	8	9
Clerical	42	20	41	24	30
Sales and service	30	15	27	40	33
Plant/machine operators	2	0	4	2	2
Labourers	6	5	0	4	21

One of the benefits for males who undertake further study on completion of school is access to technical and professional occupations. Over 40 per cent of males who moved from school into further study and then into full-time work were working in professional or technical occupations seven years after leaving school. This was more than twice the rate for those who experienced an interruption — through being unemployed, out of the labour force or in part-time work — in their transition to full-time work.

Females are much more likely to work in clerical occupations than are males. For instance, 42 per cent of females who worked continuously in full-time work after leaving school were in clerical jobs compared to 11 per cent of males. Participation in clerical work varied across pathways. Over 40 per cent of females who did further study or entered continuous full-time work on leaving school worked in clerical occupations, whereas 24 per cent of those who had a brief interruption and 30 per cent of those who had an extended interruption did so. The latter two groups were more often employed in sales and related occupations, the other major field of employment for females.

Figure 6.1 Rates of participation in at least one incidence of formal training at any time across the first seven post-school years, by gender and pathway*



* Formal training refers to seminars, workshops, lectures, presentations or formal training programs provided by the employer either at the workplace or at another site.

Employer-provided training

As years in employment increased, so did the likelihood of school leavers in the late 1980s reporting participation in employer-provided training across the initial seven post-school years (see Figure 6.1). Specifically, 82 per cent of males who were in full-time work from the time of leaving school had participated in at least one incidence of formal training provided by their employer. This was compared to 74 per cent of those who had experienced a brief period out of full-time work, and 68 per cent of those who had experienced an extended period out of full-time employment.

Years of employment are important to receiving at least some employer-provided training, as Figure 6.1 shows. They also influence the amount of training received. Table 6.4 presents the number of training spells across three pathways. It suggests that one of the effects of entering and remaining in full-time work after leaving school is to receive considerably more employer-provided training than those who have a more interrupted path to employment. Nearly 40 per cent of those who were continuously employed in full-time work received five or more spells of formal on-the-job training. By comparison, none of those who experienced an extended interruption in their transition from school to stable full-time work had more than four spells of training with most having just one (28 per cent) or two (21 per cent).

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Table 6.4 Rates of participation in formal training across the first seven years out of school, by gender and pathway

Spells of training*	Pathway		
	Full-time work	Study/work	Extended interruption/work
		Males	
One	13	15	28
Two	6	8	21
Three	10	21	10
Four	13	14	9
Five	15	10	0
Six	12	11	0
Seven	12	0	0
		Females	
One	7	12	20
Two	12	22	23
Three	16	14	18
Four	13	12	9
Five	8	27	0
Six	25	4	0
Seven	11	0	0

* A spell of training refers to reported participation in employer-provided training in a given year. Thus, five spells of training means that the respondent participated in training in five different years.

It would seem from these results that one of the advantages of entering full-time employment earlier in the transition from school is the opportunity it gives for accumulating work-related skills not only through broad job experience but also through specific work-based training. The groups of young people who manage to find full-time work early build on their work experience through access to on-the-job training. It is this sort of skills acquisition that is likely to improve their future job prospects and employability. Those whose pathway from school involves mainly unemployment or periods not-in-the-labour-force fall well behind in the acquisition of skills through employer-provided training.

Unemployment

Concern has been expressed recently about the numbers of young people who are not able to secure stable full-time jobs and move in and out of periods of unemployment and part-time work without participation in further education or training (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 1997). There were four pathways identified in the current study that involve young people who spend long periods of time in such activities — those who were mainly unemployed, those mainly in part-time work, those mainly not in the labour force (for the period when they were in the labour force seeking work), and those who experienced an extended period without full-time work in the transition from school.

Unemployment is an activity that affects all of these groups. The mean number of months unemployed for each group is presented in Table 6.5. For comparative purposes, the results for those who experienced only a brief period without full-time work in the transition from school are also provided.

The average number of months unemployed for the group who were looking for work for most of the seven years was 54 months for males and 43 months for females. Among those who made the transition to full-time employment following a brief period (up to 24 months) of part-time work, unemployment or a period not-in-the-labour-force, the mean number of months was 10 months for males and 7 months for females. The time unemployed was longer for those who experienced a more extended period without full-time work (19 months, on average, for males, and 14 months for females).

Table 6.5 Mean months of unemployment in the first seven post-school years, by pathway and gender

	Mean months of unemployment		
Pathway	Males	Females	Persons
Brief interruption/work	10	7	9
Extended interruption/work	19	14	16
Mainly part-time work	15	12	13
Mainly unemployment	54	43	49
Mainly not in the labour force	18	10	11

As well as duration of unemployment, it is useful to examine the number of spells of unemployment. Information on unemployment spells is presented in Table 6.6. It shows that among those whose transition from school mainly involved unemployment, some experienced long periods of continuous unemployment. About 15 per cent had three or less spells of unemployment, indicating long continuous periods without work. Others within this pathway had frequent spells of unemployment interspersed with short periods engaged in other activities. Over 10 per cent had five or more spells of unemployment.

Frequent spells of unemployment were also experienced by those who take an extended period of time before settling into full-time work. Nearly one-third had more than five spells of unemployment. It suggests a process of intermittent spells of unemployment and other activities in the early labour market career.

Table 6.6 Spells of unemployment across the first seven post-school years, by pathway

Spells of unemployment	Pathway (% of those in the pathway experiencing unemployment)				
	Brief interruption/ work	Extended interruption/ work	Mainly Part-time work	Mainly unemployed	Mainly not in labour force
None	11	8	2	0	16
One	21	10	12	2	21
Two	18	12	17	2	21
Three	18	17	21	11	15
Four	11	13	19	9	10
Five	12	11	10	18	10
Six	5	11	6	20	7
Seven or more	1	5	4	12	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Part-time work

Part-time work can also be associated with a marginalised work status. There are some young people who struggle to find full-time work and rely for their livelihood on part-time jobs. Table 6.7 shows that 8 per cent of females and 4 per cent of males were employed in part-time jobs for three or more of the seven years. Some, of course, choose to be in part-time work and do not want full-time jobs. Table 6.8 reveals that in the fourth post-school year about two-thirds of males in part-time work and about one-half of the females in part-time employment were interested in obtaining full-time jobs. This pattern changes across the post-school years, at least for females. In the first year most in part-time work want full-time work (73 per cent of females). The percentage falls each year. In the fourth year out, half of the females in part-time work express an interest in full-time work and half do not.

Table 6.7 Number of years of part-time work as main activity, by gender

Characteristic	Number of years of part-time work only (% distribution of the number of years)							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall	68	18	8	3	2	0	0	0
Sex								
Males	76	16	5	2	1	0	0	0
Females	59	21	13	4	3	1	0	0

Table 6.8 Percentage distribution of those in part-time work who want a full-time job, by years out of school and gender

	Years out of school			
Characteristic	1	2	3	4
Overall	70	69	64	57
Sex				
Males	66	67	61	63
Females	73	71	66	53

But part-time work can also provide an important avenue to full-time work. Part-time work, rather than unemployment or periods out of the labour force altogether, can provide work experience and access to on-the-job training which enhance prospects for obtaining full-time work. Over one-third of those who experienced a brief interruption in their transition from school to full-time work, held part-time jobs for one or two years before moving into full-time work. In a sense part-time work acted as a stepping stone to full-time employment (see Table 6.9). Many of those who experienced an extended period of transition to full-time work also spent some time in part-time jobs. Over two-thirds spent one or more years in part-time work.

One feature of note in Table 6.9 is the relatively low rate at which those who were unemployed for the major part of their first seven post-school years worked in part-time jobs during that time. Over one-half did not spend any time in part-time work, despite the lengthy periods of unemployment (four or more years).

Table 6.9 Number of years of part-time work as main activity, by pathway (% distribution of the number of years)

Number of years	Brief interruption/ work	Extended interruption/ work	Mainly unemployed	Mainly not in labour force
0	59	35	53	60
1	31	25	35	27
2	9	28	9	11
3	0	8	3	1
4	0	4	0	1
5	0	0	0	0
6	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Labour market programs

During the early 1990s there were several labour market programs in place to assist young people in the transition from school to work, particularly those who experienced difficulty in finding full-time work. Information was collected on participation in several of these including Skillshare, Traineeships, Jobstart, and the Landcare Environment Action Program (LEAP). The question asked of respondents was whether or not the job they currently held was obtained through the program. The results are presented in Table 6.10. They show that about 5 per cent of males and females reported gaining employment through the Traineeship program. A further 7 per cent of males and 5 per cent of females from this group of young people reported that they were successfully employed through the Jobstart scheme, with only small numbers reporting success with Skillshare or LEAP. It must be remembered that at this time (the late 1980s and early 1990s) the Skillshare and LEAP programs were in their infancy.

Rates of reported employment obtained through participation in the different labour market programs vary according to the transition pathway (Table 6.11). The highest rates for the Jobstart program were reported by those who experienced either a brief or extended interruption in their transition from school to full-time work (about 9 per cent for both). This may indicate that the programs were successful in assisting those with these patterns of transition, though more information is needed to ascertain whether or not the employment gained was stable and long term or not.

Table 6.10 Percentage distribution of the target sample reporting employment assistance through a labour market program, by gender

	Obtained program assistance		
Type of program	Males	Females	Persons
Traineeship	5.3	5.8	5.5
Jobstart	6.5	5.4	6.0
Skillshare	0.3	0.8	0.6
LEAP	0.3	0.0	0.2

Table 6.11 Participation in labour market programs, by pathway

Type of program	Full-time work	Training/ work	Study / work	Brief interruption/ work	Extended interruption/ work	Mainly part-time work	Mainly unemployed	Mainly NILF
None	92.6	83.3	90.1	83.9	83.2	91.4	88.0	92.7
Traineeship	3.3	10.1	4.1	6.5	7.5	1.7	5.4	2.4
Jobstart	3.7	6.0	4.1	8.6	8.7	5.2	5.4	4.9
Skillshare	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.6	1.7	1.1	0.0
LEAP	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Activities of those not in the labour force

Approximately 85 per cent of the young people who were not in the labour force for most of the seven initial post-school years (those not working, nor in further study, nor unemployed) were engaged in childrearing responsibilities. The annual rates for the target sample of those not in the labour force are reported in Table 6.12. They show that the majority of young females not in the labour force have children. The rates grow each year so that while many in the first post-school year do not have children (43 per cent), the vast majority who are not in the labour force (86 per cent) do by the seventh year.

There are a number of young people who are not in the labour force and who do not have children. Roughly 30 to 50 per cent of these on an annual basis report being engaged in domestic duties. The majority, whether in domestic duties or not, on an annual basis report being interested in working but were unable to find jobs (see Table 6.13). This group has in the past been referred to as the hidden unemployed.

Table 6.12 Percentage distribution of those not-in-the-labour-force with children

	Females		Males		Persons	
Years out of school	Children	No children	Children	No children	Children	No children
1	57	43	13	87	46	54
2	64	36	6	94	50	50
3	78	22	7	93	64	36
4	80	20	10	90	66	34
5	78	22	10	90	66	34
6	86	14	5	95	70	30
7	86	14	5	95	68	32

Table 6.13 Percentage distribution of the main activities of those not-in-the-labour-force without children

	Activity		Would work if a job was available	
Years out of school	Home duties	Other	Yes	No
1	38	62	80	20
2	48	52	78	22
3	40	60	60	40
4	37	63	100	0
5	46	64	86	14
6	50	50	60	40
7	41	59	-	-

Pathways and the lasting effects of initial experiences

It has long been argued that what happens in the first year after leaving school shapes to a considerable extent young people's subsequent labour market outcomes. Specifically, it has been suggested — and supported by considerable research — that an "unsatisfactory" start in the labour market (being unemployed for a lengthy period, working only part-time and not studying, or being out of the labour force altogether) so adversely affects young people and/or employers' perceptions of their employability that they struggle to secure employment over the longer term. This view has been challenged recently by some United States research which suggests that the adverse impact of an unsatisfactory start in the labour market may have been overstated (Klerman and Karoly, 1995). That research indicates that by their mid-20s the large majority of young people have obtained full-time employment, and that how they started off in the labour market does not seem to matter all that much. Expressed in colloquial terms, the debate is now whether adverse early labour market experiences are a "mill stone" over the longer term, or whether they indeed act as another form of "stepping stone" to stable full-time employment.

To study the effects of initial post-school experiences, a cross-tabulation of participation in the eight pathways against main activity in the first post-school year was generated. Table 6.14 classifies the distribution of young people across the pathways in terms of the nature of their experience in the first post-school year. As was argued earlier in the report, the first four of those pathways could be considered to represent a "successful" transition from school to work:

- full-time work;
- training and then full-time work;
- further study and then full-time work; and
- no more than two years outside full-time work.

The other four pathways are more problematic in that either full-time work is not secured or sustained during the first seven post-school years, or it was achieved after an extended period (up to four years) without full-time work. Table 6.14 enables investigation of the extent to which what happens in Year 1 shapes the likelihood of finishing in one of the more "successful" or more "problematic" post-school pathways in terms of the amount of time spent in full-time employment. To bring out this distinction even more clearly, Table 6.15 groups the eight different pathways into these two broad categories.

Table 6.14 Percentage distribution of pathways, by main first year activity and gender

Pathway	Main activity in first year						
	Apprentice/ traineeship	Full-time work	Part-time work only	Part-time work/ study	Unemployed	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Males			
Full-time work	0.0	42.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Training/work	80.6	14.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8
Further study/work	0.8	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.3	54.1
Brief interruption/work	13.2	23.6	34.2	66.7	39.2	31.3	18.4
Extended interruption/work	4.7	9.6	39.0	33.3	23.0	12.5	11.0
Mainly part-time work	0.0	1.5	17.1	0.0	4.1	6.3	4.6
Mainly unemployment	0.0	4.8	9.7	0.0	33.8	25.0	9.2
Mainly not-in-labour-force	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.8	0.9
				Females			
Full-time work	0.0	48.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Training/work	51.9	2.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Further study/work	0.0	4.7	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	50.6
Brief interruption/work	22.2	25.4	31.8	50.0	20.3	8.5	21.8
Extended interruption/work	14.8	9.4	30.3	25.0	26.6	6.4	12.6
Mainly part-time work	3.7	2.9	13.6	12.5	10.9	8.5	6.9
Mainly unemployment	7.4	1.8	3.0	0.0	26.6	6.4	1.2
Mainly not-in-labour-force	0.0	4.7	19.7	0.0	15.6	70.2	6.9
				All persons			
Full-time work	0.0	45.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
Training/work	75.6	8.4	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Further study/work	0.6	4.0	0.9	9.1	0.0	1.6	52.6
Brief interruption/work	14.7	24.5	32.7	54.6	33.3	14.3	20.9
Extended interruption/work	6.4	9.5	33.6	27.3	23.2	7.9	11.7
Mainly part-time work	0.6	2.2	15.0	9.1	7.3	7.9	5.6
Mainly unemployment	1.3	3.3	4.7	0.0	30.4	11.1	5.6
Mainly not-in-labour-force	0.6	2.7	12.2	0.0	5.8	55.6	3.6

Table 6.15 Percentage distribution into "successful" and "problematic" pathways over the first seven post-school years, by main first year activity and gender

Main activity in first year	Successful pathways		Problematic pathways	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Apprenticeship/traineeship	95	74	5	26
Full-time work	83	81	17	19
Full-time study	74	72	26	28
Part-time work & study	67	63	33	37
Part-time work	34	33	66	67
Unemployed	39	20	61	80
Not in the labour force	38	9	62	91
Total	75	62	25	38

Note: A "successful" pathway is defined here as one involving three or more years of continuous full-time work in the first seven years after leaving school; a "problematic" pathway is defined as one involving less than three years full-time work in that period.

Table 6.15 shows quite clearly the relationship between being engaged in positive activities in the first post-school year and the likelihood of experiencing a successful pathway over the next six years. This is most evident for males whose principal activity in the first post-school year is an apprenticeship or traineeship. Almost all of those young men (95 per cent) subsequently experience what can be characterised as a successful pathway. The large majority of young men who spend the first post-school year in full-time work also experience a successful pathway (83 per cent), as do those who start with full-time study (74 per cent) or part-time work combined with study (67 per cent). By contrast, less than two-fifths of young men whose main first year activity is somewhat problematic experience a successful pathway over the next six years.

The same general pattern holds for female school leavers. If the first post-school year is spent in a positive way (in structured training, full-time work or study) there is a strong likelihood that full-time work will be the main pattern experienced over the next six years. However, for those young women whose main activity in the first post-school year is working part-time (but not studying), or being unemployed, or outside the labour force altogether, only between 9 and 33 per cent subsequently experience a successful pathway over the next six years.

Although the overall pattern is similar for young men and young women, it is noteworthy that in every category of activity in the first post-school year, young women are less likely to subsequently experience a successful pathway than are young men. These differences amount to at least 20 percentage points in the case of those doing apprenticeships or traineeships in the first post-school year (although there are relatively few young women in that activity), or who start off unemployed or outside the labour force. Converting a promising start into longer-term labour market success appears to be more difficult for young women than for young men.

The main reason why young women experience a weaker relationship between an early positive start and the likelihood of sustained full-time work is that young women are more likely to leave the labour force during their late teens and early 20s than are young men. This decision by young women, which is mostly associated with having children, can in many cases be motivated by positive considerations. However, the evidence suggests that women who are out of the labour market for extended periods can find it difficult to obtain good jobs should they return. This is especially so — as has been shown by this report — when the young women outside the labour force are more likely to have been early school leavers, or relatively low achievers at school, or to have come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

7

Conclusion – Policy Implications

This report has mapped in considerable detail the diversity of post-school pathways followed by a national sample of Year 10 students over a seven-year period from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. By focusing on the 57 per cent of the original sample who did not obtain a university degree or TAFE associate diploma (or who were not enrolled for such qualifications in the seventh post-school year) the analysis has concentrated on those for whom getting a job was a key concern immediately upon leaving school.

The results show that the move from school to work can be a relatively smooth transition for some young people. About 20 per cent of school leavers obtain a full-time job on leaving school and, while they may change jobs along the way, remain in full-time work for the next seven years. A further 13 per cent obtain apprenticeships or traineeships which lead to continuous full-time work, while a similar percentage undertake further study and later gain long term full-time employment. In addition about 24 per cent experience only a short period of unemployment or part-time work before entering lasting full-time employment.

However, for the remaining one-third of young people, the transition from school to work is not smooth. For 7 per cent it involves long term unemployment while another 5 per cent experience mainly part-time work in the search for a full-time job. For a large group — 13 per cent — full-time work is achieved, but only after an extended period (up to four years) of unemployment, part-time work or activities outside of the labour force. A further 7 per cent never really enter the labour market, spending most of their time rearing children or being engaged in other activities.

The young people whose transition from school is more problematic are disproportionately drawn from particular educational and social backgrounds. Many are low school achievers, and many have not completed Year 12. Females are more likely than males to not enter the labour force, while males are more likely to be unemployed. Young people from low SES backgrounds tend to have a more difficult time making the transition to full-time work than do those from high SES origins. Young people with a disability are more likely to experience difficulties than those without a disability.

A common and key feature of the experiences of those who have a more problematic transition is the relationship between their pathways and the activities they participate in during their first post-school year. Most who do not have a smooth school to work transition, often having experienced academic failure in school and then end up leaving school early, start out unemployed or at best in part-time work. Their experiences lend support to the "mill-stone" view of the impact of early labour market experience on workforce careers rather than to the "stepping stone" argument. For these young people, rather than the initial settling-in period representing a trial period where activities act as a stepping-stone to full-time employment, the results suggest that a negative early start has adverse long-term consequences. Results such as these underline the importance of intensive follow-up measures for school leavers experiencing problems in the labour market.

The results also reinforce the importance of preventative measures within the education system. As has been detailed in the report, there are strong associations between schooling and social background and the likelihood of where young people find themselves in their first post-school year. Young people are not distributed randomly among the main initial post-school activities. Achieving well in school, and completing Year 12, have significant employment and earnings outcomes for young people a decade or more after leaving school. Early school leavers have less chance of securing full-time employment, and a problematic early start in the labour market can be difficult to overcome. This disadvantage serves to reinforce the impact of disadvantages experienced earlier in the school and social system.

From an educational policy perspective, the strongest thrust needs to be preventative: improving young people's foundation skills for lifelong learning, and providing learning environments that are attractive and relevant to the great majority of the young (Ainley & McKenzie, 1998). Experience in Australia and elsewhere shows that there is no inevitability about the number of early school leavers, and that chances for successful intervention are higher while young people are still in school. Offering a range of pathways suited to differing interests and needs at the end of compulsory education encourages a higher proportion of young people to remain in education and training. Intensive measures to help early leavers in the labour market can be all the more effective if resources are freed up by keeping their numbers low in the first place.

The Australian approach to the school-to-work transition process has both benefits and costs (McKenzie, 1998). Those who succeed in education generally do well in the labour market, and the system offers considerable flexibility and individualisation. However, those who leave school early seem to be penalised by a labour market that emphasises the level of education attained, and it is not clear that the opportunities for re-entry to education and training are taken up by those who need them most. Relatively loosely connected systems of education and employment such as those in Australia tend to produce more segmented "winners" and "losers" than in countries that retain a higher proportion of young people in secondary school and provide them with occupationally-relevant qualifications.

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APPENDIX 1: DATA AND METHODS

The variables used in this study were defined as follows.

1. **Schooling attained**: Schooling attained refers to the years of secondary school completed by the respondent. In some of the analyses it is treated as a dichotomous variable representing completion of Year 12 or not. In some instances, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 completion are reported separately.

2. **Socio-economic status**: Socio-economic status was derived from parent occupation data. Where both parents were employed, the highest status of the two occupations (highest of either the mother or father) was used. The variable was formed by translating the data on occupation to a four point prestige scale comprising (1) professional and managerial, (2) clerical and related intermediate non-manual work, (3) skilled manual and (4) unskilled manual. This scale was developed by Najman and Bampton (1991).

3. **Place of residence**: This variable covered young people living, at the age of 14, in (1) rural areas of Australia or (0) urban/metropolitan centres. It was derived from a question asking whether the respondent lived in a capital city, some other city, a rural town or village, or other rural area.

4. **Parents' birthplace**: The birthplace variable was coded according to three categories: (1) Australian-born, (2) born in another English-speaking nation and (3) born in a non-English speaking country. To be classified as non-English speaking, both parents had to born in a non-English speaking country. To be classified as Australian-born, one parent had to be born in Australia.

5. **Type of school attended**: This measure refers to the type of school attended at age 14. Three categories are used: (1) attendance at a government school, (2) Catholic school, and (3) non-Catholic private.

6. **Disability:** Disability refers to 'any disability or health problem which limited the amount of work and/or type of work' young people could do.

7. **School achievement:** School achievement is a score which combines results from standardised reading comprehension and numeracy tests administered to sample members at age 14. For this report, the achievement scores were divided into quartiles from lowest (1) to highest (4).

8. **Apprenticeship and traineeship**: Participation in apprenticeships and traineeships was derived from items relating to enrolments in training and education.

9. **Earnings**: The question on earnings asked respondents for their gross weekly/fortnightly/monthly pay. This information has been used to calculate a rate of weekly pay.

10. **Unemployment**: Information on unemployment has been derived from two sources: (1) a question asking respondents whether or not they had been not working and looking for work over the previous four weeks, and (2) the calendar of labour market activity which provides a week-by-week account of the respondent's employment, unemployment and not-in-the-labour force activities.

11. **Occupation**: Employment information was recorded using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO). Using this coding scheme, six categories were identified to cover the types of work at age 24. The categories included (1) Upper professional and managerial, (2) lower professional and small-scale managerial (3) technical (4) trades, (5) clerical work, (6) sales and service work, (7) plant and machine operators, and (8) labouring and related work.

12. **Main activity**: This involved the activities that young people reported that they were engaged in at their annual interview. Their main activity was defined as the one which they were doing for the main part of that year (more than six months).

13. **Full-time/part-time work:** Full-time work refers to 30 or more hours per week and part-time work to less than 30 hours.

14. **Not in the labour force**: This included those who were not in paid employment, not in further study or training, and not unemployed.

APPENDIX 2: TABLES

Table 2.1A Percentage distribution of sample with university or TAFE diploma qualifications or participating three years out of school, by selected background characteristics: Yr 10 students in the early 1990s

Characteristic	Original sample of Year 10 students				Final sample	
	No qualification or current study	Qualified or still in study	Total	N	No qualification or current study	N
Sex						
Males	70.2	29.8	100	1045	52.6	734
Females	57.7	42.3	100	1148	47.4	662
SES						
Lowest	68.9	31.1	100	524	29.1	361
Lower middle	68.7	31.3	100	767	42.4	527
Upper middle	56.1	43.9	100	433	19.6	243
Highest	42.4	57.6	100	261	8.9	111
Parents' education						
Secondary school or less	71.5	28.5	100	1323	69.8	946
Some postsecondary	61.0	39.0	100	378	17.0	231
University	41.1	58.9	100	434	13.2	178
Ethnicity						
Australian-born	66.8	33.2	100	1702	82.1	1137
Other-English	68.5	31.5	100	141	7.0	97
Non-English-speaking	43.4	56.6	100	350	11.0	152
Residence						
Urban	60.6	39.4	100	1493	66.0	905
Rural	70.5	29.5	100	662	34.0	467
School type						
Government	67.9	32.1	100	1586	78.9	1077
Catholic	53.4	46.6	100	420	16.4	224
Independent	33.8	66.2	100	187	4.6	63
Disability						
No disability	67.0	33.0	100	2016	92.4	1351
Disability	63.1	36.9	100	177	7.6	112
School attainment						
Early school leaver	96.7	3.3	100	494	35.4	478
Year 12	55.5	44.5	100	1570	64.6	871
Early school achievement						
Lowest quartile	88.0	12.0	100	570	35.2	502
Lower middle quartile	71.5	28.5	100	526	26.4	376
Upper middle quartile	58.0	42.0	100	567	23.1	329
Highest quartile	41.6	58.4	100	523	15.3	218

* The final sample excludes young people who had completed a university degree or TAFE diploma in the first three post-school years, or were studying towards these qualifications in the third year.

Source: ACER analysis of *Australian Youth Survey* data

Table 3.1A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by gender

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Males			
1	40.9	20.3	6.4	0.7	11.3	2.4	18.1
2	43.2	20.1	5.2	0.6	11.8	2.6	16.6
3	46.0	19.3	5.1	1.0	13.1	2.3	13.1
4	58.5	11.8	4.2	1.3	12.7	2.8	8.8
5	70.9	5.8	3.8	1.0	10.0	2.9	5.5
6	74.0	3.5	7.2	1.0	7.3	3.1	3.9
7	77.5	1.6	6.1	0.6	9.1	3.1	1.9
				Females			
1	47.1	4.4	10.8	1.3	11.8	7.9	16.7
2	51.8	3.4	10.8	0.0	9.5	9.9	14.7
3	54.8	4.1	10.1	2.1	9.7	10.2	9.1
4	59.2	2.0	8.0	1.8	9.6	12.8	6.7
5	60.5	0.7	11.3	1.5	5.7	14.8	5.7
6	64.1	0.7	10.9	1.0	5.9	13.3	4.1
7	61.2	0.5	12.2	0.8	6.0	17.0	2.3
				Persons			
1	43.9	12.8	8.5	1.0	11.5	5.0	17.4
2	47.2	12.2	7.8	0.3	10.7	6.1	15.7
3	50.2	12.1	7.4	1.5	11.5	6.0	11.2
4	58.8	7.2	6.0	1.5	11.3	7.5	7.8
5	66.0	3.4	7.3	1.2	8.0	8.6	5.6
6	69.4	2.2	8.9	1.0	6.7	7.9	4.0
7	69.8	1.1	9.0	0.7	7.6	9.7	2.1

Table 3.2A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by school attainment: males

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Early school leaver			
1	48.3	29.1	3.1	0.0	10.6	3.1	5.8
2	44.8	29.9	3.5	0.7	14.9	2.1	4.2
3	50.9	21.8	4.2	0.0	15.2	3.5	4.5
4	66.3	6.0	3.9	0.0	16.5	4.2	3.2
5	74.9	3.5	3.8	0.7	12.2	3.8	1.1
6	73.9	1.8	7.8	0.7	9.5	3.9	2.5
7	75.2	1.4	5.4	0.4	12.6	4.0	1.1
				Year 12 leaver			
1	35.3	13.6	8.9	1.3	11.5	1.8	27.5
2	41.9	13.1	6.6	0.5	9.3	3.0	25.5
3	43.0	17.3	5.8	1.8	11.8	1.3	19.3
4	53.2	15.6	4.5	2.3	10.1	1.5	12.9
5	68.5	7.3	3.8	1.3	8.3	2.3	8.6
6	74.3	4.5	6.8	1.3	5.5	2.5	5.0
7	79.3	1.8	6.4	0.8	6.7	2.6	2.6

Table 3.3A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by school attainment: females

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Early school leaver			
1	51.7	5.9	9.3	0.9	15.3	14.0	3.0
2	49.1	3.9	11.6	0.0	12.1	18.5	4.7
3	52.8	3.8	9.8	0.9	13.6	16.6	2.6
4	54.9	1.7	8.9	0.0	10.1	22.8	1.7
5	53.8	0.8	12.6	0.4	6.3	23.1	2.9
6	57.0	0.0	11.5	1.7	5.5	22.1	2.1
7	48.5	0.0	14.7	0.9	7.4	27.3	1.3
				Year 12 leaver			
1	44.4	3.5	11.5	1.6	9.6	4.0	25.4
2	53.4	3.2	10.3	0.0	7.9	4.7	20.5
3	56.3	4.2	10.0	2.9	7.4	6.3	12.9
4	61.9	2.1	7.5	3.0	9.1	6.4	9.9
5	64.7	0.5	10.5	1.8	5.3	9.7	7.4
6	68.7	1.1	10.2	0.5	6.2	7.8	5.4
7	69.2	0.8	10.4	0.8	5.2	10.6	3.0

Table 3.4A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first three post-school years, by quartiles of school achievement: all persons

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Trainee	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Lowest			
1	33.3	19.0	10.9	1.7	16.6	6.7	11.8
2	43.1	16.4	10.7	1.2	18.1	5.9	4.7
3	51.0	14.0	10.6	0.7	15.8	7.2	0.7
				Lower middle			
1	36.6	18.8	10.8	1.7	11.8	4.2	16.1
2	46.9	18.1	10.3	2.4	8.1	7.1	7.1
3	54.6	19.6	9.2	1.9	8.1	4.8	1.9
				Upper middle			
1	34.3	17.1	6.6	2.8	11.5	3.3	24.4
2	46.3	16.1	7.7	1.9	9.3	5.6	13.2
3	57.3	15.0	10.4	1.2	8.5	5.8	1.9
				Highest			
1	32.8	16.1	9.4	4.0	7.4	4.0	26.4
2	46.9	13.3	13.3	0.7	8.5	4.4	12.9
3	63.6	14.2	8.0	1.1	6.8	4.0	2.3

Table 3.5A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by socioeconomic status: males

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Trainee	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Low SES			
1	38.9	22.2	5.6	0.6	14.8	3.1	14.8
2	44.0	23.3	5.0	1.3	10.7	1.9	13.8
3	48.5	19.0	6.8	1.2	14.1	1.8	8.6
4	60.6	13.1	5.0	0.6	10.6	3.8	6.3
5	74.8	2.5	5.0	0.0	9.4	3.8	4.4
6	71.3	2.5	9.4	1.9	10.0	3.8	1.3
7	74.1	1.9	5.1	0.6	11.4	5.1	1.9
				Lower middle SES			
1	45.4	23.6	4.4	0.4	9.2	1.3	15.7
2	50.7	22.5	2.2	0.4	8.2	1.7	14.3
3	48.1	23.4	4.8	0.9	11.3	1.3	10.4
4	62.6	13.7	3.5	1.8	9.7	1.3	7.5
5	74.2	6.6	2.6	1.3	5.7	2.6	7.0
6	78.9	2.6	5.7	0.9	5.7	2.6	3.5
7	84.0	1.8	4.0	0.9	5.8	2.2	1.3
				Upper middle SES			
1	37.5	19.5	11.7	2.3	8.6	3.1	17.2
2	37.8	21.5	5.9	0.0	14.8	1.5	18.5
3	38.7	20.4	4.4	1.5	13.1	2.9	19.0
4	55.1	13.0	4.4	1.5	8.7	3.6	13.8
5	65.0	7.3	4.4	0.0	13.1	4.4	5.8
6	73.0	4.4	7.3	0.7	3.7	2.9	8.0
7	69.8	2.3	7.8	0.8	10.9	3.9	4.7
				High SES			
1	40.0	17.3	8.0	0.0	8.0	2.7	24.0
2	35.4	17.1	8.5	1.2	8.5	4.9	24.4
3	55.0	11.3	5.0	0.0	5.0	3.8	20.0
4	56.3	7.5	3.8	2.5	13.8	3.8	12.5
5	76.0	3.8	2.5	0.0	8.9	1.3	7.6
6	77.2	2.5	6.3	0.0	5.1	5.1	3.8
7	86.1	0.0	6.3	0.0	5.1	1.3	1.3

Table 3.6A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by socioeconomic status: females

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Trainee	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Low SES			
1	43.5	6.5	11.8	1.2	15.9	7.7	13.5
2	50.9	3.6	11.2	0.0	12.4	12.4	9.5
3	53.3	3.0	10.7	2.4	9.5	13.0	8.3
4	54.2	1.8	8.9	3.0	8.3	17.9	6.0
5	55.9	0.0	12.4	0.0	8.8	18.8	4.1
6	62.1	0.6	7.1	0.0	7.1	18.9	4.1
7	58.2	0.6	15.8	0.6	3.6	18.8	2.4
				Lower middle SES			
1	57.7	2.7	10.1	1.6	7.4	5.8	14.8
2	56.5	3.6	10.4	0.0	6.7	6.2	16.6
3	57.7	4.6	7.7	2.0	8.7	8.7	10.7
4	64.3	2.6	7.3	1.0	9.3	8.3	7.3
5	68.0	0.5	10.8	0.5	3.1	12.9	4.1
6	67.0	0.5	13.6	1.6	4.2	10.0	3.1
7	66.0	0.5	9.4	1.6	5.2	16.2	1.1
				Upper middle SES			
1	51.7	4.3	9.5	2.6	7.8	1.7	22.4
2	51.3	3.4	14.5	0.0	6.0	4.3	20.5
3	52.5	5.9	17.0	0.9	7.6	4.2	11.9
4	62.4	0.9	6.0	3.4	12.0	6.0	9.4
5	62.5	0.8	10.0	5.8	3.3	6.7	10.8
6	70.2	0.9	11.4	0.0	4.4	5.3	7.9
7	62.5	0.9	12.5	0.9	8.9	10.7	3.6
				High SES			
1	37.9	6.1	12.1	0.0	7.6	12.1	24.2
2	53.7	1.5	9.0	0.0	7.5	13.4	14.9
3	59.1	4.6	9.1	4.6	7.6	6.1	9.1
4	69.2	3.1	7.7	0.0	6.2	7.7	6.2
5	68.2	3.0	13.6	1.5	3.0	6.1	4.6
6	66.7	1.5	18.2	1.5	6.1	4.6	1.5
7	67.2	0.0	15.6	0.0	6.3	7.8	3.1

Table 3.7A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by place of residence: males

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Urban			
1	41.0	17.1	6.9	1.1	12.0	2.4	19.5
2	43.4	17.8	5.4	0.7	11.9	2.6	18.2
3	46.0	15.8	5.4	1.3	12.3	3.2	16.0
4	56.3	10.8	4.6	2.0	13.4	3.0	10.0
5	70.5	5.4	3.0	1.1	9.7	3.5	6.9
6	73.0	3.5	8.6	0.9	6.3	3.2	4.5
7	76.6	1.6	6.5	0.5	9.8	2.9	2.2
				Rural			
1	40.6	26.8	5.4	0.0	9.8	2.2	15.2
2	42.7	24.7	4.9	0.4	11.5	2.6	13.2
3	46.1	26.5	4.4	0.4	14.8	0.4	7.4
4	63.0	13.8	3.6	0.0	11.2	2.2	6.3
5	71.9	6.7	5.4	0.9	10.7	1.8	2.7
6	76.1	3.6	4.1	1.4	9.5	2.7	2.7
7	79.5	1.8	5.4	0.9	7.6	3.6	1.3

Table 3.8A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by place of residence: females

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Urban			
1	46.5	4.5	9.6	0.8	11.7	9.0	17.8
2	50.0	2.9	9.8	0.0	10.1	10.9	16.2
3	53.8	3.7	10.8	2.1	9.5	10.0	10.0
4	58.6	1.9	8.3	2.4	9.4	11.8	7.5
5	59.4	0.3	11.1	2.1	6.1	14.1	6.9
6	64.2	0.8	12.2	1.6	4.9	11.4	4.9
7	62.4	0.5	12.8	0.8	6.3	15.3	1.9
				Rural			
1	48.1	4.3	12.8	2.1	11.9	6.0	14.9
2	54.6	4.2	12.2	0.0	8.4	8.4	12.2
3	56.3	4.6	8.8	2.1	10.1	10.5	7.6
4	60.0	2.1	7.5	0.8	10.0	14.2	5.4
5	62.1	1.2	11.5	0.4	4.9	16.1	3.7
6	64.0	0.4	8.8	0.0	7.5	16.3	2.9
7	59.2	0.4	11.2	0.9	5.6	19.7	3.0

Table 3.9A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by type of school attended

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Trainee	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemploy-ment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				Government			
1	44.4	13.8	8.2	1.0	11.7	5.4	15.5
2	46.9	13.0	8.0	0.3	11.4	6.4	14.0
3	50.2	12.9	7.5	1.3	12.5	6.4	9.3
4	58.3	7.2	6.3	0.9	12.5	7.9	6.8
5	66.1	3.2	7.2	1.1	8.4	9.2	4.9
6	68.6	2.0	9.1	1.1	7.4	8.3	3.6
7	68.9	1.1	8.9	0.6	7.7	10.3	2.4
				Catholic			
1	44.3	9.8	7.2	1.0	11.3	3.1	23.2
2	50.5	11.1	7.6	0.5	7.6	5.1	17.7
3	53.0	11.1	7.1	3.0	7.6	3.0	15.2
4	62.2	6.6	5.6	3.6	7.1	5.1	9.7
5	69.9	3.6	9.2	1.5	3.6	6.1	6.1
6	74.2	2.6	8.8	1.0	4.1	5.2	4.1
7	71.9	1.0	9.4	1.0	7.8	7.3	1.6
				Non-Catholic private			
1	36.4	6.8	14.8	1.1	10.2	4.6	26.1
2	44.0	5.5	6.6	0.0	9.9	4.4	29.7
3	44.2	6.3	7.4	1.1	9.5	8.4	23.2
4	57.0	7.5	3.2	4.3	6.5	7.5	14.0
5	56.8	5.3	5.3	2.1	12.6	6.3	11.6
6	68.0	3.1	7.2	0.0	4.1	9.3	8.3
7	75.3	1.1	8.6	1.1	6.5	7.5	0.0

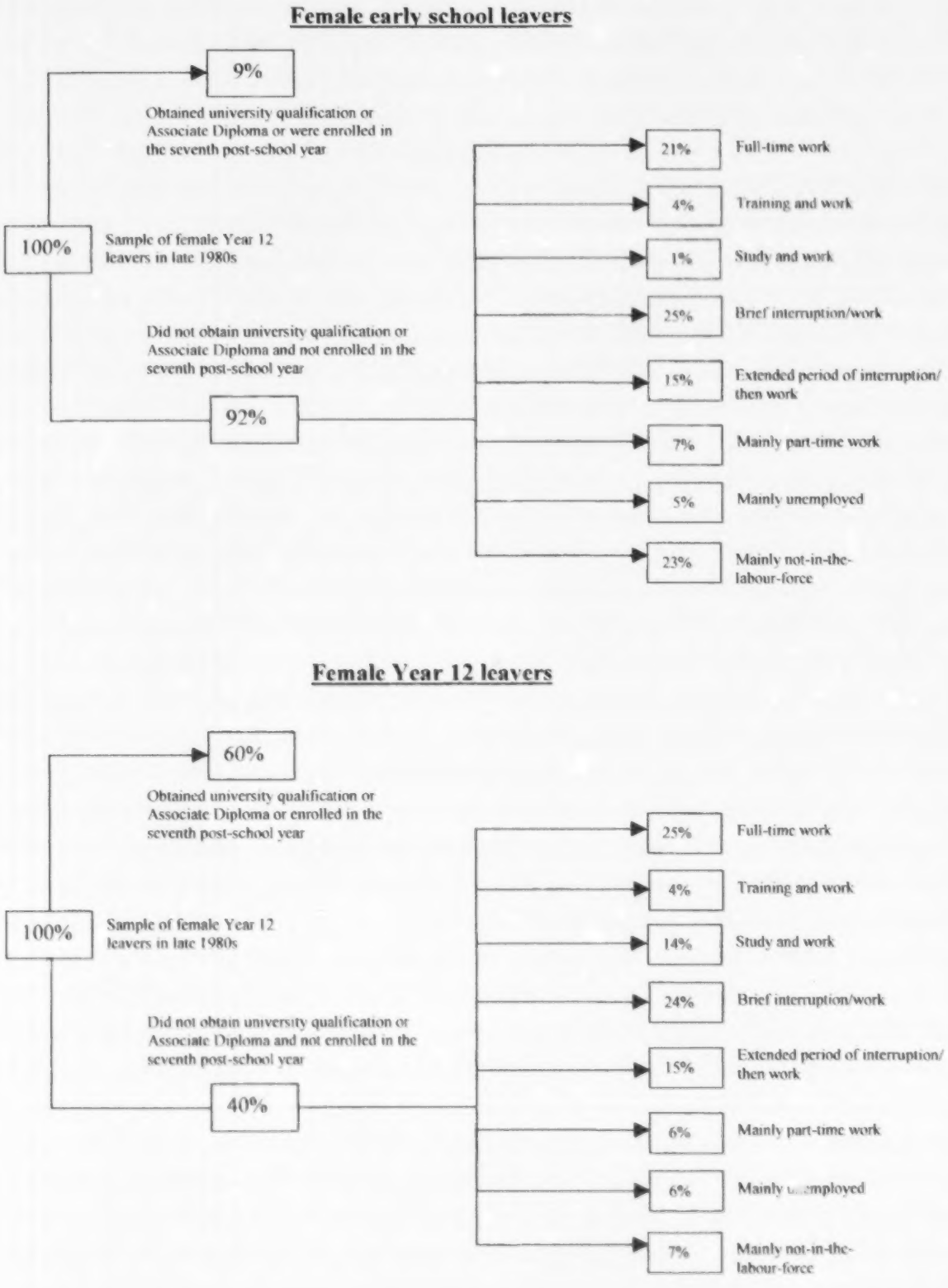
Table 3.10A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by parents' country of birth

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemploy-ment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				English-speaking			
1	45.2	12.9	9.2	0.8	11.0	5.5	15.5
2	48.1	12.9	8.1	0.2	10.4	6.1	14.2
3	50.1	12.4	7.8	1.4	11.6	6.5	10.3
4	59.5	7.1	6.2	1.5	10.6	8.0	7.0
5	65.3	3.7	7.7	1.2	7.7	9.2	5.1
6	69.2	2.3	9.1	0.9	6.8	8.6	3.1
7	70.2	1.2	8.6	0.6	7.5	9.7	2.2
				Non-English-speaking			
1	34.5	11.9	3.6	2.4	16.1	3.0	28.6
2	38.4	9.3	7.0	1.2	12.2	5.8	26.2
3	45.7	13.7	3.4	2.9	11.4	4.6	18.3
4	52.3	9.3	4.7	2.3	14.5	4.7	12.2
5	64.4	3.5	4.6	1.7	10.9	5.2	9.8
6	67.3	2.3	8.2	1.8	7.6	4.1	8.8
7	68.7	0.6	8.4	1.2	9.0	9.6	2.4

Table 3.11A Percentage distribution of education and employment activities in the first seven post-school years, by reported disability

Years out of school	Full-time employment	Apprentice/ Traineeship	Part-time work only	Part-time work & study	Unemployment	Not in labour force	Full-time study
				No disability			
1	45.0	13.4	8.1	1.1	11.3	3.7	17.5
2	48.6	12.7	7.6	0.2	10.2	4.9	15.9
3	51.6	12.7	7.2	1.4	10.4	5.2	11.7
4	60.0	7.5	5.9	1.5	10.9	6.6	7.7
5	68.0	3.4	6.9	1.4	7.3	7.5	5.7
6	71.3	2.2	8.2	1.0	6.3	6.9	4.0
7	71.3	1.1	8.8	0.7	7.4	8.9	1.9
				Disability			
1	32.2	6.8	12.7	0.0	13.6	17.8	17.0
2	34.2	7.3	10.6	1.6	15.5	17.1	13.8
3	36.8	7.2	9.6	3.2	22.4	14.4	6.4
4	47.2	4.0	7.2	2.4	14.4	16.0	8.8
5	47.2	3.2	12.0	0.0	14.4	18.4	4.8
6	51.2	1.6	15.5	0.8	9.8	17.1	4.1
7	55.8	0.8	10.8	0.8	10.0	17.5	4.2

Figure 5.2A Pathways of female school leavers, by school attainment


Female early school leavers
9%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or were enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Sample of female Year 12 leavers in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
92%
21% Full-time work
4% Training and work
1% Study and work
25% Brief interruption/work
15% Extended period of interruption/ then work
7% Mainly part-time work
5% Mainly unemployed
23% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force
Female Year 12 leavers
60%
Obtained university qualification or Associate Diploma or enrolled in the seventh post-school year
100%
Sample of female Year 12 leavers in late 1980s
Did not obtain university qualification or Associate Diploma and not enrolled in the seventh post-school year
40%
25% Full-time work
4% Training and work
14% Study and work
24% Brief interruption/work
15% Extended period of interruption/ then work
6% Mainly part-time work
6% Mainly unemployed
7% Mainly not-in-the-labour-force

LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH (LSAY)

The LSAY project is jointly managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

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